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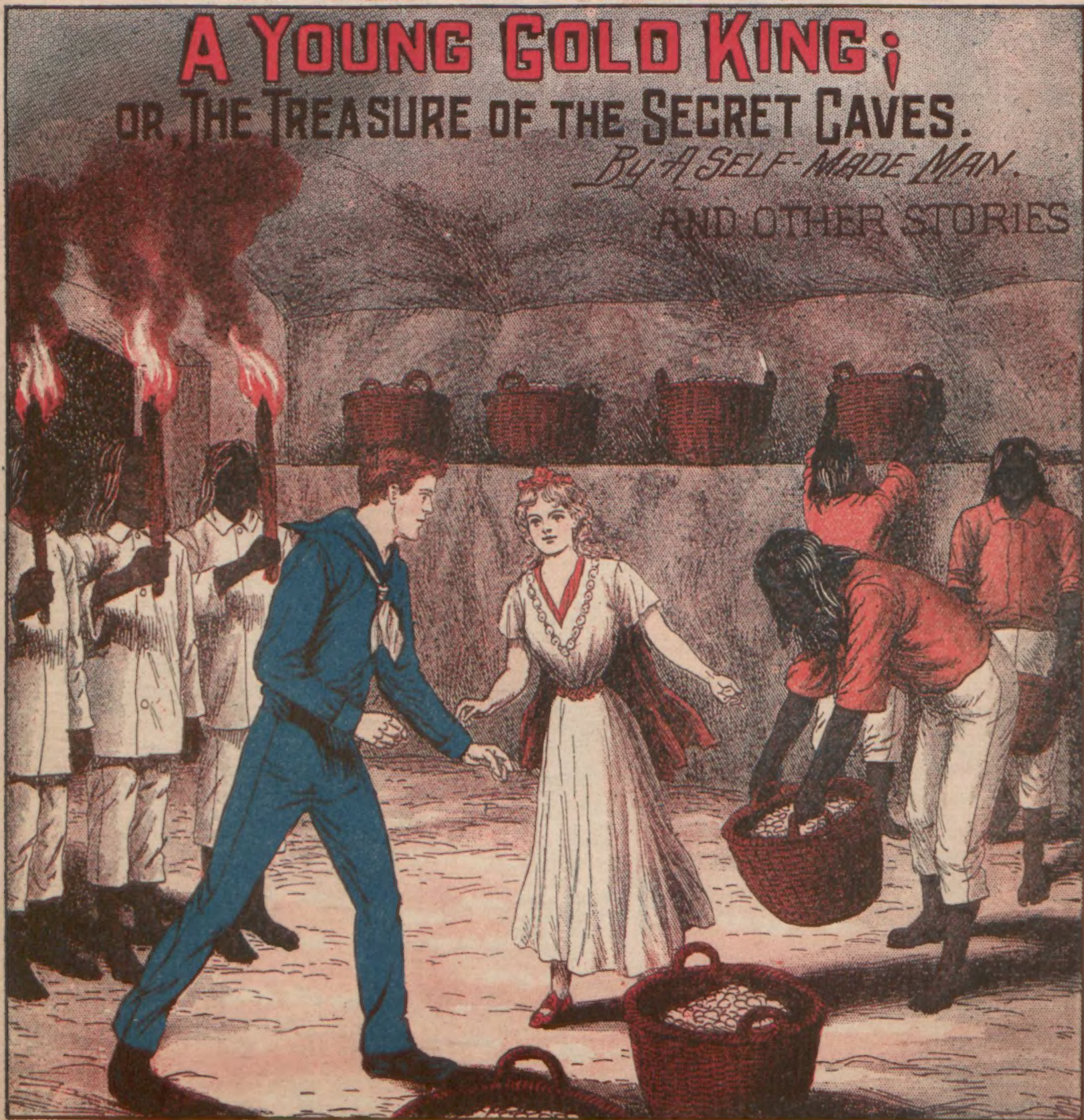
FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

A YOUNG GOLD KING; OR, THE TREASURE OF THE SECRET CAVES.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



"Behold the treasure of the secret caves!" said Titania, as the three natives, in obedience to her command, removed basket after basket full of golden coin from the stone shelf and displayed them before the astonished eyes of the boy.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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A YOUNG GOLD KING

OR

THE TREASURE OF THE SECRET CAVES

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

BOUND FOR THE ANTIPODES.

"All hands aloft! Make sail!" roared the chief mate of the Golden Fleece from the deck. "Shake out those reefs! Be lively, my bullies! Set stu'ns'ls! Sheet home!"

The jaunty-looking American clipper, bound from San Francisco to Melbourne, Australia, was well over the bar.

The tug had cast off and was coming around on her return trip, leaving a creamy-white semicircle of foam in her wake.

Captain Rockwell, his daughter Nellie, a bright-eyed miss of sixteen, and Richard Savage, a sprucely-dressed but sickly-looking youth of eighteen, the only son of one of the owners of the vessel, were standing at the taffrail waving their adieus to Mr. and Mrs. Savage and the men on the tug.

Astern lay the "Heads," the entrance to the Golden Gate, whence they had come, while to the leeward stretched the coast of California, a long, shelving beach of white sand.

Seaward the ocean lay like a sheet of sparkling gold in the light of the setting sun.

A solitary fishing smack, an Italian craft, bound inward, was crossing the yellow pathway, and her sail, flaunting in the sun's face, looked like a blood-red banner.

The peculiar cry of the seagulls, wheeling lazily around the vessel, seemed like a kind of bon-voyage to those bound for the far South Pacific.

"Well, Miss Nellie, we're off at last," said Richard Savage, as the tug lengthened her distance from the sailing craft. "It will be some months before either of us set our eyes again upon the golden shores of California. Do you feel homesick at leaving San Francisco, the place where you were born and lived all your life?"

"A little bit, Mr. Savage," replied the girl.

"Oh, don't call me Mr. Savage. Call me Richard," said the boy impatiently. "All the girls call me that, while the boys call me Dick."

"But I hardly know you well enough yet to call you by your first name. Besides, you are the son of one of the owners, and—"

"Never mind who I'm the son of. As to not knowing me well enough, why, we are going to be together for months and are soon bound to be very well acquainted."

"Aren't you homesick yourself?" she asked.

"Me? Not a bit of it. 'Frisco is a jolly town, I know, and I'm leaving a whole lot of fellows and girls behind, but the family sawbones said I was living at too rapid a pace, burning the midnight oil, after a fashion, and my health was so run down that if my people didn't want to plant me in Lone Mountain they'd better send me on a long sea voyage, so here I am, bound for the antipodes."

"You don't look very well, that's true, but papa says you'll soon pick up."

"Sure, I will, especially in such charming company as yourself," and Richard Savage cast an admiring glance at the captain's pretty daughter.

Nellie Rockwell blushed a little under his ardent gaze and turned her face toward the fast receding tug.

Richard Savage smiled complacently.

Although socially a considerable distance above Miss Rockwell, he admired the girl on account of her good looks and winning ways.

His garments were of the best quality and of a fashionable cut.

He sported a gold watch and chain, with a diamond-studded pendant, and wore a diamond ornament in his necktie.

In the captain's safe was a draft made out in his name for a fat amount on a Melbourne banker, which he was at liberty to spend in having a good time while the vessel was discharging her cargo and taking aboard another at the colonial capital.

Finally, he was good-looking, and thought a whole lot of himself.

Such was Richard Savage, the only and rather self-willed son of the wealthy senior partner of the shipping firm that owned the Golden Fleece.

Being accustomed to lord it over the servants of the family mansion; over his parents, especially his mother, and over all his friends and acquaintances who would stand for it, and most of them did, he expected to boss things aboard the Golden Fleece as far as he chose to exercise that privilege.

His father practically owned the vessel, so he expected all hands, from the captain down, would take their hats off to him, so to speak.

If they failed to treat him with the respect and consideration he looked for, he made up his mind that there would be something doing when the ship got back to San Francisco.

Such were his thoughts when he boarded the vessel in the stream, with his father and mother, before she lifted anchor.

Then he was introduced to Nellie Rockwell.

He was immensely taken with her, and decided that he would monopolize her society during the voyage.

He expected her to appreciate the fact of being on intimate terms with a young gentleman of his advantages, and that she would devote herself wholly to his entertainment.

At the same time he found himself making a strong bid for her favor, as he was anxious to stand well with her, and was prepared to make certain concessions, if necessary, in order to do it.

The sky was now aglow with the last rays of the sun fast vanishing below the far-off sea line.

The Golden Fleece, with every sail spread to the light breeze, was eating her way, as it were, through the golden shaft of fire that shot across the waves.

The ship's bell forward slowly struck four times.

The seaman, whose trick at the wheel had now expired, glanced expectantly forward.

In a moment or two a stalwart, fine-looking lad, in the usual rig of a foremast hand at sea, sprang up the ladder leading to the poop, and walked briskly aft to relieve the old weater-beaten seadog at the wheel.

Captain Rockwell had already gone below.

The steward, a mulatto, popped his head up the companion-way fronting the brass-hooded binnacle and announced to the young people at the taffrail that supper was on the table.

This was a signal for Nellie and Richard to turn around and leave the rail.

"Why, Jack!" cried the girl, in a tone of pleasant surprise, as her eyes rested on the boy who had just taken charge of the wheel. "I did not notice you before. How long have you been at the wheel?"

"Not more than a minute, Nellie," he answered, with a cheerful smile.

"Well, I'm awfully glad to see you. Isn't it funny that I should be aboard the ship with papa?"

"It's rather unusual to have a lady passenger, I'll admit, but I'm bound to say that you're as welcome as the flowers in May."

"Upon my word, you said that very nicely, Jack," laughed the girl. "You are certainly improving."

"Am I?" laughed the boy. "I'm glad to hear it."

"You are, indeed. We'll see a good deal of each other now, won't we?"

"I have no doubt we will."

"Aren't you glad?" she asked coquettishly.

"You need hardly ask that question; but you must remember that I'm not my own master now, as I was ashore. We can only meet occasionally as my duties permit. I cannot come on the poop except when it is my trick at the wheel, and if you care to see me when I'm off duty you will have to come as far as the waist, at any rate."

"I'll come. At any rate, I'll see you at the wheel. Remember," she added, laying her shapely hand on his arm, "you have promised to teach me to steer the ship, and I shall hold you to your word."

"I shall be glad to do that," he answered; "but I'm afraid you'll not find much fun in it, nor will you find it an easy job."

"I promise to be a patient pupil, anyway," she replied smilingly.

"Supper is waiting for us, Miss Nellie," interposed Richard Savage impatiently.

While she was talking to the young sailor he had been standing with a frown of annoyance on his face, one of his hands resting on the brass rail of the companion stairs.

He could not understand how she could waste so much time on a common sailor, and he was jealous because she did so.

"I will come in a moment, Mr. Savage. Don't wait for me."

"I thought you were going to call me Richard?" he said in a piqued tone, not taking advantage of her permission to retire.

"Will you be on duty here some time, Jack?" she asked the young sailor, not noticing Savage's last remark.

"I'll be here two hours. This is the beginning of the second dog-watch. At four bells, or eight o'clock, I'll be relieved."

"Well, I must go to tea now. I'll see you when I'm through."

"All right, Nellie. I'll be glad to enjoy as much of your company as you may care to honor me with, now that I'm under sea orders."

"Oh, you'll see enough of me before we reach Melbourne. It's quite a long trip in a sailing vessel."

"Yes. I'm thinking you'll find it tiresome long before you get near our destination."

"Do you think so?" she said, as she moved away. "Now, I don't agree with you. Good-by."

"Good-by, Nellie."

"I don't see what you find about a common sailor to talk so long to him," said Richard Savage petulantly, as he followed her down the brass-bound stairs.

"Don't you?" she replied with a toss of her head. "Jack

Archer and I are old friends. And he isn't a common sailor, either," with some spirit in her voice.

"All sailors are common," persisted the young aristocrat disdainfully.

"That's where you're mistaken. This is Jack's last trip before the mast. He will go out as second mate on the next voyage. Papa says he's competent to do that now, but there was no opening for him this trip."

"Mates are not so much better than sailors," sneered Savage.

"Aren't they?" laughed the girl.

"No. They graduate from the forecabin. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

"Indeed," cried Nellie, with a scornful look at her companion. "Perhaps I might be allowed to say that all's not gold that glitters, either."

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Richard almost angrily, having an idea that the girl was giving him a shot.

"Nothing more than what you meant by your remark," she replied saucily, taking her seat at the table.

Richard looked disgruntled, and began to eat in silence.

CHAPTER II.

RICHARD SAVAGE HAULS IN HIS HORNS A BIT.

Left alone at his post, Jack Archer attended to his duty of keeping the vessel on her course.

He kept his eye on the weather leach of the maintopsail yard.

When the sail began to flap a bit he knew the ship was falling off, and he rectified the matter by moving the wheel a spoke or two.

Jack Archer was a fine lad, and a protege of Captain Rockwell's.

He was an orphan.

His father had been a warm personal friend of the master of the Golden Fleece, and when Jack was thrown on his own resources by the death of his surviving parent the skipper had offered to take him to sea and teach him the business.

Jack accepted the invitation gratefully, and though the captain played no favorites at sea, he gave the young sailor every opportunity to get ahead in his profession.

The boy had chances afforded him to put in his spare time studying navigation, and by using his eyes he soon became thoroughly familiar with the duties that fall to the lot of a ship's mate.

He was able to calculate a ship's position at sea by the most approved methods, and knew how to handle a vessel in theory under any condition.

He was familiar with the mysteries of the most complex knots, and knew how to repair damages to any part of a sailing craft.

In a word, he was a thoroughly practical sailor.

As darkness came over the face of the ocean, and the shadows fell upon the tophanger of the vessel, Jack struck a match and lighted the lamp in the binnacle so he could see the face of the compass.

This was his guide now, the sailor whom he had relieved having given him the course.

The breeze had stiffened a bit at sundown, but not enough to careen the vessel to any extent to the leeward.

Steering the ship under the present conditions was child's play to him, and did not absorb his whole attention.

He had time to think of various things, and probably the fair girl in the cabin, whose silvery laugh occasionally came to his ears up the companion-way, occupied her share of his thoughts.

He considered Nellie an old friend, since they had known each other all of six years.

They had always been good friends, too, though they sometimes had their sham battles just to add spice to their friendship.

In fact, they were very like brother and sister in their attitude to each other.

At length Nellie came running up the companion stairs, followed by Richard Savage.

The long edge of gray haze which lay around the eastern horizon, on which the dark rim of the sea was defined, as with the sweep of a soft brush dipped in indigo, had been gradually lightening during the last few minutes—at first with a faint radiance, then a thread of silver ran along the line of vapor, growing brighter and brighter at one point,

until the arch of the moon rose slowly, like the fabled Venus from her couch in the sea.

Nellie struck the deck at that moment.

"Oh, isn't that lovely!" she cried rapturously. "Isn't it, Jack?"

"Yes," replied the young sailor without any special enthusiasm, for he had seen the sight so often that it was an old story with him. "It's almost as lovely as somebody I know."

The girl easily understood the compliment his words implied, and she flashed a swift glance at him through the darkness, while the color mounted in her face and her heart beat a shade quicker.

Richard Savage also heard his remark, understood its import, and muttered something savagely between his teeth.

"Come, Miss Nellie," he said, catching her by the arm, "let's go over by the rail. This sailor has his work to attend to."

"No," she replied, "I'm going to talk to Jack. Will you permit me to introduce you, and then we can all three chat together?"

"You'll have to excuse me," he said gruffly, walking away in a huff.

"He's mad," laughed the girl to Jack. "But I don't care. He's too tony for me, anyway. I'm sorry he came with us, for I don't think I shall like him a bit."

"I guess he doesn't want to know an every-day sailor like me. Well, just wait till a bit of rough weather hits us. It will take all the starch out of that dude," chuckled Jack.

"Oh, I shan't like rough weather a bit, at least, not at first. I know I shall be dreadful seasick."

"I'm afraid that's one of the penalties of coming to sea, Nellie. But you won't be under hatches long, that's one consolation."

"How do you know I won't? Suppose a storm comes up that lasts a week? Where will I be all that time?"

"In your little bunk, probably," grinned Jack. "At any rate, you'll have my sympathy."

"If that would cure me I'd be under lasting obligations to you, but I'm afraid that it wouldn't."

"I'll tell you what would cure you quicker than anything else."

"What? I'd like to know," she said eagerly.

"A piece of nice, fat pork held in front of your nose," laughed Jack.

"You horrid fellow!" cried the girl, giving him a playful pinch on the arm. "You know that would make me twice as sick."

"Only for a short time, and then you'd come around like a bird. I know, for it was tried on me."

At that moment Captain Rockwell came on deck and glanced at the compass card.

Nellie then walked over to the spot where Richard Savage was gnawing his finger-nails in sullen anger.

"Well, Mr. Richard, are you very much provoked with me?" she asked him, with a merry twinkle in her eyes.

"I don't see why you want to talk to that fellow in preference to me," he growled ill-humoredly.

"Didn't I tell you that Jack and I are old friends? I think as much of him as though he were my brother. You ought to let me introduce you to him. You'd find him one of the nicest boys you ever met."

"I dare say," replied Richard sarcastically; "but I'm not accustomed to talking to common boys."

"Oh, fudge!" replied Nellie. "You'll get over that feeling before you reach Melbourne. What's the use of being so exclusive on board ship?" added the independent little miss. "It's all very well when you're at home, where you can choose your own associates. But here it is different. Can't you see that? Papa says the sea is the greatest leveler in the world. That it will bring even a king to his knees. If you only expect to talk to papa and me I'm afraid you'll soon find yourself rather lonesome."

Young Savage wasn't used to being talked to in that fashion, even by his mother, and it went against his grain.

Still, he did not feel disposed to quarrel with so charming a creature as the captain's daughter, especially as she was the only one aboard he had any disposition to be on friendly terms with.

While he was provoked with her independent spirit, somehow or another he could not help liking her all the more because she didn't kowtow to him.

He saw that to secure her favor he must make an effort to propitiate her, and this was rather a new experience for him with the girls.

"Well," he said, a bit ungraciously, "you can introduce me to your friend Jack."

"Now you're acting sensibly, Mr. Richard," she replied with a pleased laugh.

"I wish you'd drop the mister, Miss Nellie," said Richard pettishly.

"Oh, I couldn't; that is, not just yet. Wait till I know you better."

Nellie led the way to where Jack stood with his weather-brown hands on the spokes of the wheel.

"Jack, this is Richard Savage, son of one of the owners of the ship. Mr. Richard, let me introduce you to Jack Archer."

Richard bowed rather stiffly and gingerly accepted the hand that Archer extended to him.

"Glad to know you, Mr. Savage," said Jack breezily.

Richard murmured something that Jack could not understand, and then the three began to talk together, but the young aristocrat devoted the greater part of his conversation to Nellie.

At length four bells were struck again, which was the signal of Jack's relief, and the beginning of the first watch, from eight o'clock till midnight.

A sailor came forward to take the wheel.

Jack gave him the course, and after remaining about five minutes to finish his conversation with Nellie and her companion, he bade them both good-night, and, greatly to Richard's satisfaction, went forward to turn in.

CHAPTER III.

BILL BLAINE.

The wind held light for nearly a week, and neither Nellie nor Richard Savage experienced even the suspicion of seasickness.

Richard himself began to feel much better physically than he had been for many months past, and he also grew quite cocky over the fact that he was not seasick.

Jack Archer saw Nellie frequently, but it was nearly always in the company of Savage, who clung about the girl like a leech, and showed a tinge of jealousy every time she approached the young sailor.

Finally the sixth morning broke dull and threatening. There was a rough sea on, to which the ship courtesied with the grace of a French dancing-master, and then rolled to the leeward, her head rising as she afterward rolled to the windward.

There was nothing unpleasant about this motion to the people aboard who had acquired their sea legs, but it knocked all the pleasures of life out of Nellie Rockwell and Richard Savage, who awoke in their berths feeling very miserable indeed.

Jack Archer and his chum, Butch Whitbeck, a jolly, but not over-handsome, boy of about his own age, were sitting together with their backs against the mainmast conversing.

They were both members of the first mate's watch, which went on duty this morning at four o'clock.

It was now after six, and there wasn't the slightest sign of the sun.

"Looks as if we're going to have a gale, Jack," said Whitbeck, hunching up his knees.

"We'll have it, all right," replied his companion. "I took the liberty of looking at the barometer when we turned out, and I looked at it a few minutes ago again. It is falling, and has been falling, the mate told me, since midnight."

"That dude we've got aboard, who has been putting on airs because he has not been sick, will get all that's coming to him now," chuckled Whitbeck.

"That's what he will," grinned Jack. "I can't say that I have any sympathy to waste on him. Every time he's talked to me he seemed to consider it a kind of condescension on his part."

"Those kind of chaps make me sick," said Butch. "I suppose he thinks because his father owns this ship we ought to get down on our knees to him. Well, you won't catch me salaaming to him. Not on your tintage!"

At that moment there was a call from the mate for the watch to shorten sail.

Jack and Butch sprang to their feet and both were soon scrambling up the ratlines like a pair of monkeys.

In a few minutes they were hanging out on the foretop-sail yard, helping to furl the sail.

Some of the canvas was taken in entirely, and reefs were made in the other sails.

Then the boys returned to the deck.

Half a gale was soon blowing and the pitch of the vessel increased to a considerable extent.

In the course of an hour breakfast was served out to the crew, and they ate like men to whom the pains of dyspepsia were as a sealed book.

The captain and the first mate breakfasted alone in the cabin that morning, for neither Nellie nor Richard Savage were in a condition to leave their berths.

The weather continued about the same all day, and toward night the barometer began to rise again.

Next morning there was still a pretty good sea running, but the sky was clear and the sun rose in all its customary glory.

On this morning Jack and Butch went on duty in the forenoon watch, which began at eight and lasted till noon.

Jack was sent forward to take a spell as lookout.

About nine o'clock he saw something dark bobbing up and down on the waves right ahead.

It was impossible for him to tell what it was, owing to the distance that intervened.

He kept his eye on it, however, and in the course of ten minutes made it out to be a large hencoop, with something stretched across the top of it.

He reported the fact to the first mate, who brought his glass to bear on the object.

The officer soon made out that a man was either clinging to the coop, or was lashed to it.

He sent word to Captain Rockwell, who was in the cabin looking after his sick daughter.

The skipper came on deck, took a look at the coop and then ordered a boat lowered to pick up the man, who was evidently alive, for he was seen to turn his head and look at the approaching vessel.

The ship was hove to, the boat was sent away, and the unfortunate stranger, who proved to be a sailor, was soon on board.

As soon as he was taken from the coop, the mate, who had gone with the boat, produced a flask of brandy and poured a good dose down the man's throat.

It put life into the fellow at once, and he sat up without help.

After the boat was raised to the davits the rescued chap stepped down on deck with a little help from the boat's crew and looked fore and aft with a seaman's experienced eye.

The mate led him aft to give an account of himself to the captain.

He was a pretty hard-looking object, as he stood bare-headed in his soaked garments before the skipper.

There was a sinister glint in his eyes that did not favorably impress Captain Rockwell, and he addressed the fellow rather sharply.

"What's your name?" was the first question the skipper put to him.

"My name," replied the man, slowly, in a hoarse tone that seemed to come from his boots, "is Bill Blaine."

"Bill Blaine, eh? How came you to be on that hencoop?"

"Me and the hencoop is all that's left of the brig Wellington."

"How and when did the brig founder?"

"In a corkin' gale two nights ago."

"Who was the master, where did she hail from and where bound?"

"The skipper's name was Jenkins. We was bound from Sidney to San Francisco with a load of coal."

The captain asked him several other questions and then told the mate to fit him out with a dry suit of togs from the slop chest, and to take him forward to the galley, where the negro cook would give him something to eat.

"I don't like the chap's looks," said the mate, subsequently, to his superior.

"Nor I," replied the captain. "He looks for all the world like one of those South Sea Island beach-combers, and you know what class of men they are. Formerly graduates from Botany Bay, and other British penal settlements in Australia, they are now not a whit better than their predecessors. This chap has the face of a rascal in every line, and his eye is the eye of a man not to be trusted. Take him into your watch and keep a sharp lookout on him."

Bill Blaine, the newcomer, ate all that the cook set before him and then retired to the forecabin, where a spare bunk was assigned to him.

He tossed his dry clothes on the foot of the bunk, got rid of his wet ones, and crawling under the blankets, was soon snoring away as though he had been in the ship since she left port.

He woke up late in the afternoon, sat up with his bare legs dangling out of the bunk and looked around the gloomy sailor's parlor.

Then he began to sing in a fog-horn voice:

"Thirteen dead men 'round the carpenter's chest
Yo ho, and a bottle of rum!
Old Nick and the sharks have got the rest,
Yo ho, and a bottle——"

"Hello, my bully!" he said, breaking off suddenly and looking across at Jack Archer, who had been lying with his clothes on upon his bunk and who had started up when the fellow began his vocal offering. "Hand me a chew of 'bacca, will you?"

"Sorry that I can't oblige you, but I don't chew," replied Jack.

"You don't—chew!" replied Blaine, slowly. "You don't chew!" he repeated. "Say, what kind of a hybrid animal are ye anyway?"

"I'll get you some tobacco," replied Jack, springing out of his bunk.

"That's right, my hearty," cried the fellow. "Now, yer talkin'."

Jack secured part of a plug for the derelict and brought it to him.

He took a big bite of the compressed weed, eyeing Jack all the time from head to foot, as if sizing the lad up, and then put the rest of the plug under his pillow.

"What's yer name, Younker?" he asked.

"Jack Archer, and yours is Bill Blaine, I believe."

"You believe right, then," chuckled the fellow. "Say, what's the name of this old hooker?"

"The Golden Fleece, George Rockwell, master, seven days from 'Frisco, and bound for Melbourne," said Jack.

"Bound for where?" exclaimed Bill Blaine, suddenly stopping his jaws.

"Melbourne, Australia."

The derelict ripped out an imprecation and glared savagely at Jack.

The boy was startled by the nasty look in his eyes.

"So this hooker is bound for Melbourne, is she?" he muttered, in a hissing tone. "Cuss Melbourne and the hull British—say, my hearty, kin you get me a drink of rum? I'm sick, and I need it. You git it and me and you's friends."

Jack thought he'd rather be excused from having such a rascally-looking chap for a friend.

However, he didn't let the fellow suspect his sentiments, but told him he'd get the liquor.

Representing that Bill Blaine was not feeling well, he got a glass of stiff spirits from the chief mate and brought it to the derelict.

The fellow threw it off at a gulp, winked one eye, smacked his lips, and started to get into the garments the mate had given him.

CHAPTER IV.

SAVED FROM THE SEA.

Next morning while Jack was at the wheel Nellie came up the companion stairs, looking rather seedy.

"Good-morning, Nellie. Glad to see you on your pins again. How are you feeling?"

"Don't mention it, Jack," she replied, with a little grimace. "I've been dreadfully ill. I thought I should die."

"Die! Nobody does of seasickness, not unless there's something else the matter with them. Say, how is Savage?" he added, with a grin.

"Papa told me that he was twice as sick as I was."

"Ho! He was the boy that didn't think he was going to get sick this side of Melbourne. I hope it's taken some of the conceit out of him. Isn't he out of his bunk yet?"

"I haven't seen him."

"If he knew you were talking to me now he'd be up here if he had to crawl," chuckled Jack.

"What makes you think so?"

"He's dead jealous of me talking to you."

"What nonsense!"

"No nonsense about it. I can read that chap like a book. He's gone on you."

"He is not," protested Nellie, with a blush.

"All right. Have it your own way. I'm not going to scrap with you just after you've got out of bed. But it's a fact, just the same."

"I think you're real mean to tease me about Richard Savage. He doesn't care about an ordinary girl like me."

"Ordinary girl like you," repeated Jack, with a twinkle in his eye. "Do you call yourself an ordinary girl?"

"What else am I? Papa is only a sea captain."

"Oh, I see what you're getting at. But you're not ordinary by any means. You're as pretty and as nice as any girl Savage knows in his high-toned circle of acquaintances. If you weren't he wouldn't hang around you as if he was afraid you might get away from him."

"Thank you for the compliment," replied Nellie, with a smile, dropping him a mock courtesy.

"Don't mention it, you're welcome."

"Say, Jack, papa told me that we picked up a man adrift on a hencoop. He said the man claimed to be the only survivor of a brig that went down in the recent gale."

"That's right. But he's a pretty hard character. He's in my watch, and the worst of it is he's taken a fancy to me and Butch, or pretends he has. I don't like him for sour potatoes. Neither does Whitbeck. He's got a bad eye, and goodness, how he can syear! He seems to have a grouch against Australia for some reason. He told Butch that he didn't intend going there, but I don't see how he can help himself, unless he jumps overboard."

"Papa isn't overpleased to have him on board, I should judge. What is his name?"

"Bill Blaine. He's short, thick-set, and has a wicked eye. You'll see him when he stands his trick at the wheel."

"I'm not anxious to see him."

There was a shuffling sound on the companion stairs, and a moment later a chalky-looking countenance rose slowly above the deck.

"Hello, Savage," said Jack, "got your sea legs on at last, have you?"

The young aristocrat looked shaky and somewhat unhappy.

He had not yet recovered wholly from his indisposition, but Captain Rockwell had routed him out of his bunk and chased him on deck to get the sea breeze.

"Good-morning, Mr. Richard," said Nellie, pleasantly. "How do you feel?"

"I feel all broke up," replied Richard.

"Had your breakfast yet?" asked Jack.

"I can't eat anything," said Richard, with a rueful expression.

"You only think you can't. A nice, juicy slice of fat pork now would——"

"Oh, heaven! Don't talk about such a thing," groaned Richard, putting his hand on his stomach.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Jack, to suggest such a thing?" said Nellie, trying to maintain a sober face.

"That's what the second mate brought me after I had been sick a whole day and night," chuckled the young sailor.

"And you ate it, didn't you?" laughed the girl.

"I did—like fun. I jumped out of my bunk and ran on deck, where the sea air soon cured me. You'll feel all right in an hour or so, Savage, especially if you go for'ard and sun yourself on the fok's'le."

Richard wobbled as he tried to walk about the quarter deck.

Finally he leaned heavily on the rail and looked down at the water, as it rose and fell with the vessel.

Jack and Nellie resumed their conversation and almost forgot that Richard was near them.

Suddenly as the vessel rose on the swell they were startled by a cry of terror from Savage.

They turned just in time to see his legs disappearing over the rail.

Richard had been overcome with weakness and dizziness, and, leaning too far over the taffrail, had lost his balance.

Nellie uttered a scream that attracted the attention not only of the second mate, who stood at the break of the poop watching something going on forward, but of all on deck.

"My gracious!" ejaculated Jack, releasing the wheel, and springing for one of the life-preservers lashed to the rail. "Grab the wheel, Nellie, and hold it steady."

The girl did so, while Jack, finding that he couldn't disengage the life-preserver quick enough, sprang overboard to the assistance of young Savage.

The second mate, seeing Jack go over the stern, roared "Man overboard!" and rushed to the wheel.

Captain Rockwell dashed up the stairs and asked what was the matter.

The second mate pointed astern to where Jack was swimming, while Nellie tearfully explained that Richard had fallen overboard and Jack had jumped after him.

The captain issued hurried orders to bring the ship to and threw a couple of the life-preservers into the sea.

In the meantime Jack was striking out in an effort to reach the shipowner's son, whom he could not yet make out anywhere on the waves.

Richard sank like a shot when he first struck the water. He uttered a second cry for help just as the sea closed over his head.

When he came up the vessel was some distance away, and the frightened boy gave himself up for lost.

He could swim pretty well under ordinary circumstances, but under present conditions he was so rattled that he couldn't do anything for himself except waste the little strength he had in beating the water aimlessly.

Consequently he went down again until his consciousness almost forsook him.

Jack was a fine swimmer, and rode the surges like a duck.

Every time he was swept upward he looked around for some sign of Savage, but for a time he saw nothing of the unfortunate boy.

He was on the point of giving up the quest, thinking that Richard had sunk never to rise again, when he saw the boy's head rise a short distance from him.

This was the second time that Richard came to the surface. Jack at once made a desperate effort to reach him before he sank again.

He was almost within reach of the almost unconscious boy when he began to sink for what would have been the final time.

Jack felt that all depended on the result of the next few seconds.

Throwing himself forward he dived at the receding figure. His body cleaved the water like a fish, and his hands grasped the now senseless youth.

Kicking out, he came to the surface with Savage.

As the surge swept them upward, Jack saw the Golden Fleece hove to a quarter of a mile away, and a boat working toward them at full speed.

The second mate was standing up in her stern scanning the waves for one or both of the boys.

At length he made out two heads on the surface of the heaving sea, and directed the boat's head toward them.

Jack was treading water and supporting Savage with one arm.

When the boat came up Richard was lifted aboard and then Jack, somewhat exhausted by his plucky exertions, was assisted over the side.

The boat then put back for the ship.

Nellie, leaning anxiously over the taffrail, waved her handkerchief joyously when she saw that both of the boys were in the boat.

"Richard is safe, papa," she cried, eager to reassure her father, who had been in a fever of anxious suspense from the moment he heard that the owner's only son and heir had gone over into the sea. "Jack saved his life."

"Thank heaven!" said Captain Rockwell: "Had the boy been lost, I don't know how I ever could have faced Mr. Savage again. He sent Richard to sea in my care, and I feel that I am responsible for his safe return home."

While he was speaking the boat glided up alongside and the hoisting tackle was made fast fore and aft.

Most of the boat's crew climbed aboard and then she was raised to the davits, after which Richard was lifted out, carried to his stateroom, and efforts made to bring him to his senses.

CHAPTER V.

NELLIE TAKES A LESSON IN STEERING AND PROVES AN APT PUPIL.

Vigorous methods brought Richard Savage around all right, but he was a pretty weak boy after his strenuous experience with the waves.

He learned that his life had been saved by Jack Archer, and he seemed to be grateful to the young sailor.

At least he so expressed himself to Captain Rockwell

"Savage had a pretty narrow squeak for his life," said Jack to Butch Whitbeck in the fore-castle, while he was getting into dry clothes after the return of the boat. "He was going down for the last time when I dived and grabbed him. I consider him a mighty lucky boy."

"He was that. He ought to be grateful to you as long as he lives," replied Whitbeck.

"Whether he's grateful or not I'm satisfied, for I did my duty. It would have been tough on the skipper if Savage had been lost. He's responsible, in a way, for Richard's safety while he's aboard this ship."

When Jack went on deck again he encountered Bill Blaine.

"Hello, my hearty!" said the hard-looking sailor. "So yer've been takin' a swim, have ye? Who's the chap yer pulled out?"

"He's a passenger. A boy of my own age."

"Son of the owner of this here hooker, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Got lots of money, eh?" and Blaine's eyes winked in a wicked kind of way.

"I suppose his father is well fixed," replied Jack, not anxious to continue the conversation.

"What's he goin' to Australia for?" persisted Blaine.

"His health."

Blaine said no more, but walked to the vessel's side and ejected a stream of tobacco juice over the bulwark to the leeward.

Richard Savage wasn't seen on deck again until next day noon, when Jack and Whitbeck saw him sitting with Nellie, on camp chairs, near the helmsman.

After that he rapidly improved.

Jack met him when he went to put in his trick at the wheel.

"I'm much obliged to you for saving my life," he said, without any great display of enthusiasm, to Archer.

"You're welcome," replied Jack, heartily.

"My father will pay you well when the ship gets back to 'Frisco."

"No, he won't," replied the young sailor, quickly. "I don't accept pay for such things as that."

"You don't!" ejaculated Richard, in surprise. "Why not?"

"I don't believe in it."

"My father can easily give you a thousand dollars."

"I've no doubt he can, but I don't want it."

"You don't want a thousand dollars?"

"Not for saving your life."

"But I don't want to be under obligations to you. I'd rather pay you."

"Well, you can't pay me for risking my life for you."

"You didn't take any great risk, did you? You sailors can swim like ducks. I can swim, too, first-rate, but I was weak and sick at the time."

"There isn't any use of our arguing the matter, Savage. I'm glad that I was able to save you. We'll let the matter go at that."

"So you won't take a thousand dollars?"

"No, I won't."

"It's a lot of money—for a poor boy like you."

"I know it's a lot of money; but that doesn't make any difference."

"You don't seem to know the value of money," said Richard, petulantly. "That's because you never had much, I suppose."

"That needn't worry you."

"Maybe you're proud," sneered Richard.

"Perhaps I am," replied Jack, shortly.

"You aren't like other boys that I know."

"Probably not."

"I've always had plenty of money to spend, and always expect to," said Richard, in a complacent tone.

"You're lucky."

"It costs a lot of money to have a good time, but you, being a poor boy, can't understand that, of course," said Richard, swelling out with importance. "My clothes are made by the best tailor in 'Frisco. I attend an academy where only the sons of the best people are taken. I'm going to college next year. I intend to study law and become a big corporation lawyer. They make lots of money. I suppose I shall make more in one year than a poor boy like you will earn in all your life."

"And you'll spend more in one year than I will in all my life, I guess," replied Jack, more amused than displeased with the boy's consequential talk.

"Of course. A gentleman always spends a lot of money. He's got to maintain his position in society."

"If I ever require the services of a lawyer I suppose I can come to you?"

"Oh, I don't expect to take small cases. It wouldn't pay me. However, as I owe you a great favor I'll let one of my clerks attend to the matter. I shan't charge you a cent, of course," patronizingly.

"Thanks, you're very kind," said Jack, with a sly grin.

Richard then walked away, fully satisfied that he had impressed the young sailor with a proper idea of his importance in the community.

"Mr. Richard says you refused to accept a thousand dollars for saving his life, Jack," said Nellie, when she saw Jack later on.

"He told me that his father would pay me that sum when we got back to 'Frisco, but I told him very plainly that I wouldn't take a dollar. There are some things that money won't pay for, and that's one of them."

"There isn't much likelihood of you going to the poor-house, I guess."

"I hope not. My expectations are not quite as big as Savage's, but still I hope to make my mark in some way. If I fail it won't be for the lack of trying."

"I am sure of that, Jack," said the girl, confidently. "Well, when are you going to teach me to steer?"

"Now is as good as any time for you to take your first lesson. Our course is west-sou'-west. Look at the card. You'll see I've got that point on a line with that black mark on the compass rim. You want to keep it there. Take hold of the spokes and try."

Nellie did so with some diffidence.

Jack kept his eye on the weather leach of the topsail yard and saw, as he expected, the sail begin to flap.

"You're off your course, Nellie. Bring her up a bit."

"Why, the wheel hasn't moved any!" replied the girl in surprise.

"You only think it hasn't. Look at the card. You're half a point out of the way."

"Why, so it is. The card has moved around."

"No, it hasn't. The card always remains stationary, pointing toward the north. It's the ship that has moved around."

Jack moved the wheel a trifle and the card appeared to move around to its former position.

After several trials Nellie found that, do her best, she couldn't keep W. S. W. on a line with the mark.

"Suppose you look aloft, Nellie. See that sail?"

"Yes."

"It looks as smooth as a board, doesn't it?"

"Yes."

"The vessel is now dead on her course. Now, hold the wheel again and keep your eye on the sail."

Nellie did so.

"It's beginning to ripple. Now it's flapping."

"Exactly. It's spilling some of the wind because you're off your sailing point. Move the wheel a little to starboard. That's right. Now the sail is taut again and you're all right."

"How funny! Now it's shaking again."

"Do as you did before."

After repeated instructions, the girl got the knack of holding the sail steady.

"You're doing fine now, Nellie."

Just then Richard came up and looked on with some curiosity.

"Are you steering, Miss Nellie?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, with a flushed face and sparkling eye. "I'm doing it all right, too, ain't I, Jack?"

"Sure, you are."

"If you can steer, I guess I can," said Richard, confidently.

"Let him try, Jack."

"All right. You show him how."

So Nellie proceeded to repeat Jack's instructions to Savage, and he grabbed the spokes before she was half through.

"You're off your course," cried the girl, clapping her hands.

"How am I? She's going along all right."

"No, she isn't. The sail is flapping."

"What if it is? That little bit doesn't hurt," said Richard, doggedly.

The sail flapped more and more, and soon the wind began to spill from the larger sails as the ship veered little by little off her course.

Jack hastened to rectify the matter, for he knew the first mate would soon take notice of the falling off of the ship's head.

Richard, however, insisted on steering as long as he felt like it.

He said his father owned the vessel and he had the right to steer if he wanted to.

He snarled at Jack for constantly interfering, until the young sailor lost his patience and took the wheel away from him.

Then he retired, in a sulky way, with Nellie, saying that he had been insulted.

CHAPTER VI.

BILL BLAINE AND RICHARD SAVAGE.

Nellie took other lessons in steering when the wind and weather permitted, and finally was able to steer by card.

Richard was too proud to try again while Jack was around, but one day when Bill Blaine was at the wheel he came up and, offering the sailor a dollar bill, asked him to show him how to steer.

Blaine grinned, took the money and proceeded to instruct him.

Although the hard-looking sailor was the last person on board that one would suppose such a boy as Richard Savage would notice, yet before Blaine was relieved from the wheel the young aristocrat had become quite chummy with him, much to Nellie's disgust.

She took the first occasion to call Richard down about it.

"I should think you'd prefer to cultivate the acquaintance of a nice boy of your own age, like Jack, than to make friends with such a man as Blaine," she said.

"Oh, he's all right," replied Richard, carelessly. "He's only a common sailor, of course, but he knows his place. He doesn't try to put on style like Jack Archer. I hate these poor folks who try to make themselves out more than they are."

"You're mistaken about Jack," replied Nellie, standing up loyally for her friend. "He doesn't put on airs."

"Yes, he does. He puts on a whole lot of frills for a fellow of his low origin."

"What do you mean by low origin?" flashed the girl.

"Well, his people were common people, of course."

"How do you know they were?" she ejaculated, indignantly.

"Oh, I judge so," drawled the boy. "I s'pose you haven't any objection to me smoking a cigarette, have you? They're real Turkish. Cost me fifty cents a box."

He produced a box, took out a gilt paper cylinder and proceeded to light it.

"I want you to know that Jack's parents were just as good as mine," said Nellie.

Richard puffed his cigarette and made no reply.

"Jack is just as smart as any boy in the world, too," she continued, with some energy. "He may not rise to become governor of California, but he'll make his mark some other way."

"I wish you'd take as much interest in me as you do in him," said Richard, looking at her admiringly. "It would pay you better."

"Indeed!" she replied, a bit resentfully.

"I am a gentleman, while he's only a common sailor," said Richard, puffing away nonchalantly with one leg crossed over the other, as if he was the whole thing.

"If you were a gentleman you wouldn't talk the way you do," cried the girl, rising from her seat beside him and leaving the deck.

"She's a little fool," muttered Richard, angrily. "She doesn't know a good thing when she's got it. If she wasn't so pretty and fascinating I'd—oh, there's Blaine at the wheel. I'll go over and talk with him. He takes his hat off to me because he understands that I'm his superior. I can afford to converse with him. Besides, he said he had something confidential to tell me—something he wouldn't tell anybody else in the ship, even the captain. I wonder what it is?"

He walked over to the wheel.

Blaine saluted him respectfully and they were soon talking together like old friends.

"So ye don't like that Jack Archer, eh?" said Blaine, in the course of their talk.

"No, I don't. He puts on too many airs for me."

"That's right," coincided Blaine, "so he does. He and his chum, Butch Whitbeck. I don't like him myself."

"He thinks because he jumped overboard after me that he's as good as I am."

"Of course he does," agreed the hard sailor. "That's the way with them sort of chaps."

"I offered him a thousand dollars for what he did, but he was too proud to take it."

"You offered him a thousand dollars, did ye?" said the sailor, his eyes twinkling.

"I said my father would pay him that when we got back to 'Frisco."

"Oh, I see. Thought mebbe ye had the money with yer."

"Of course not. The captain has a bank draft for £100 in his safe which I'm going to blow in when I get to Melbourne," said Richard, consequentially.

"Yer folks must be made of money."

"They're well fixed," replied Richard, proudly. "It's all coming to me one of these days."

"Ye'll have some time to wait, though. Now, how would ye like to have a barrel of real gold to spend before he comes into what yer folks has?"

"I'd like it first class, but there's no danger of it coming my way."

"Isn't there?" said the sailor, dropping his voice. "Mebbe I could put you next to it."

"What do you mean?" asked Richard, taken by surprise.

"Can ye keep a secret?" asked Blaine, fixing the young aristocrat with his wicked eyes.

"Of course, I can," replied Richard, eagerly, and much mystified by the sailor's words.

"Very good. Then I know a place—an island in the south seas—where there are bushel-baskets of shining gold coin."

"Bushel-baskets of shining gold coin!" ejaculated Richard, in amazement.

The sailor nodded mysteriously.

"There's a million dollars' worth if there's a cent," he said, solemnly.

"Where is this island?" asked Richard, eagerly.

"In the south Pacific. This hooker will pass within a few hundred miles of it on her course to Melbourne. I've got the latitude and longitude of the place, and could find it if I knowed anythin' about navigation. But I don't."

"Whereabout on the island is the money?"

"It's hid away in secret caves, underground."

"And you know where those caves are?"

"Not exactly, but I'll bet I could find 'em."

"You said you could put me next to this money?"

"I did?"

"How?"

"The main thing is to reach the island. Your father owns this hooker, consequently ye ought to have some influence with the skipper."

"Well?"

"P'haps ye could git him to visit a certain island I could mention—one of the Fiji group. If he'll oblige ye by doin' it, I could find a schooner there, d'ye see, to take us to the island where the gold is."

"But even if Captain Rockwell was willing to touch at this island you mention, which ain't certain, he wouldn't let me sail away with you in your schooner."

"He needn't know nothin' about it, my hearty," said Blaine, with a shifty glint in his eyes. "The moment he drops anchor off this here Fiji island ye must get permission to go ashore to see the place."

"Yes."

"Then ye must see to it that me, Jack Archer and Butch Whitbeck goes along with yer in the boat."

"Why Jack Archer and Whitbeck?" objected Richard.

"You aren't going to let them in on this gold, too, are you?"

"Not by a long shot! But that's part of my plan. We've got to have somebody that understands navigation. Jack Archer is as good as any mate. Then Whitbeck kin help us work the schooner down to the island where the secret caves is. Then we'll promise 'em an ekal share of the money to help us load is aboard the vessel. After that Archer'll navigate the schooner back to the Fiji island. Then——"

"Well," said Richard, as Blaine paused.

"We'll fix the rest when we git that far," said the rascal, evasively. "One thing ye kin depend on, them chaps won't git none of the gold. We'll divide that ekal between me and you."

"Captain Rockwell will be awfully mad if we keep this ship waiting at the island for us to go to that place where the money is and get back with it."

"Don't ye worry about that, my hearty. Ye'll have half a million or more of shinin' gold pieces to spend, so ye needn't care nobody thinks."

The picture drawn by the artful sailor was very alluring to the boyish fancy of Richard Savage.

It was full of adventure, with a golden bait that was exceedingly attractive.

He did not think of the perils that surrounded such a hair-brained expedition, nor did he mistrust the honesty of the evil-eyed sailor who proposed it.

"Are ye with me in this?" said Blaine, after a pause.

"Yes, I'm with you, if the thing can be done," replied Richard.

"Well, my hearty, it's up to ye to work the skipper to put in to the Fiji island. That's the main thing, as I said before. We must put in at that there island."

"What's the name of that island?"

"Papua."

"How far is it from here?"

"Dunno. A good way. Get the captain to show it to ye on his chart. Find out from him how near we pass it, and then try and get him to put in there. Ships do stop there often for fresh water. I might manage to get at some of our hogs-heads and start 'em leakin' so we'd have to put in somewhere for water, anyway," he added, with a diabolical grin. "If he had to have fresh water he'd put in at Papua jest to oblige ye."

"I'll see what I can do about it," said Richard, evidently more than half committed to the scheme, "and I'll let you know next time you come to the wheel."

"That's right, my hearty," said the rascal, encouragingly. "You do your part and I'll do mine arterward. Jest remember that there's gold to burn on the island where the secret caves is."

"You are sure it's gold money?"

"Sartin sure, shipmate. Bright, shinin' gold coin."

"How did all that money get on that island?" asked Richard, curiously.

"That's a story by itself which I'll tell ye some time."

"Can't you tell me now?"

"No. It'll soon be eight bells, and I'll have to leave ye. However, I kin say this much: That there gold is mostly Spanish, and was stored up by the pirates that used to sail the South Pacific a long time ago. Long before you and me was born. It's waitin' for somebody to come and take it, and you and me is goin' to be the lucky ones. Hist! There comes the cap'n's gal. Don't say a word to her, nor anybody else, mind ye, about what I've told ye. Jest ye work the cap'n to go to that island."

Eight bells sounded at that moment, and the conference broke up.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW JACK AND HIS FRIEND BUTCH LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THE TREASURE OF THE SECRET CAVES.

"Captain Rockwell, do you know anything about the Fiji Islands?" asked Richard Savage that evening at tea.

"Why, yes," replied the skipper at the Golden Fleece. "I know something about the group. There are more than 200 of the islands in all, and nearly a third of them are inhabited. They are surrounded by shoals and reefs, and access to them is rather dangerous."

The last sentence was not particularly pleasing to Richard.

"One of them is called Papua, isn't it?" he said.

"Yes."

"I've read a good deal about this island," went on Richard, "and I should like to visit it if that were possible."

"I'm afraid you will not have the opportunity, as the ship does not touch at any point between Frisco and Melbourne."

"How far off your course is Papua?" asked Richard, somewhat disappointed at the captain's reply, which clearly indicated that he had no intention of putting in at any port that side of his destination.

"About 100 miles."

"Couldn't you put in at Papua for half a day to oblige me?"

Captain Rockwell shook his head.

"There is nothing on this island to interest you, Richard, and it wouldn't pay me to stop there unless I needed water, which is unlikely."

"I am very anxious to taste some of the bread-fruit which I read grows on these islands," said Richard, after a slight pause.

"We may pass close enough to some island in the south sea where I can send a boat off and procure some for you to

try after it has been cooked. Not only bread-fruit, but plantains, bananas, yams and cocoanuts, which are the chief productions of the South Sea islands."

"It seems to me that if you go as close to Papua as 100 miles you could afford to stop at the island. My father wants me to see all that is to be seen during this trip, and Papua is a place I'm very anxious to visit."

"If a gale blew us within sight of that particular island I might accede to your request, or if we ran short of water, but neither contingency is likely to happen."

Richard saw there was no use in pressing the matter further, so he had nothing more to say about Papua that night.

Later on he told Bill Blaine that his efforts to persuade Captain Rockwell had been a failure.

"He said if a storm blew the ship within sight of the island, or if he ran short of water, he might put in there, otherwise he wouldn't," said Richard.

The hard-looking sailor scratched his head.

"We've got to git there somehow if we're goin' after that gold coin," he said. "Storms ain't to be depended on to come up jest when we want 'em, or blow the way we want 'em to, but things might be managed so that this hooker would run short of water."

"How?"

"Now, look here, my hearty, the less a chap knows sometimes the better it is for him," said the sailor, significantly.

Richard wondered what Blaine meant, but did not dare press the matter.

The sailor did not appear to be as disappointed as he had expected, which was because the rascal more than half expected that the young man would not be able to persuade Captain Rockwell to put in at Papua.

"Well, now, shipmate, what you want to do is to watch the old man when he marks the hooker's position on his chart day by day, and find out when we're close aboard of the Fijis. You do this, and I'll look after the rest. I'll bet we'll get a sight of Papua yet."

Richard agreed to follow out Bill Blaine's suggestions, and keep the sailor accurately posted as to the ship's position day by day after she had passed the equator.

During one of the night watches soon after this conversation Blaine told Jack Archer and Butch Whitbeck the same story about the baskets of gold coin in the secret caves of the island of which he claimed to know the latitude and longitude.

Jack didn't put much faith in the fellow's yarn, but Whitbeck was greatly excited over it.

"You say there are baskets full of gold coin stowed away in secret caves on a certain island of which you have the bearings?" asked Jack, incredulously.

The derelict from the sea nodded solemnly.

"How did you happen to find that out?" continued the boy.

"You didn't see them, did you?"

"No, I didn't see 'em, but I got the story from a chap who did."

"How do you know he did? It seems to me a pretty tall story. If he saw the gold why didn't he bring it away with him?"

"Because he couldn't."

"Why couldn't he?"

"He had all he could do to bring himself away, without thinkin' of the gold," replied the sailor, rather annoyed at Jack's cross-examination.

"Then the island is inhabited, and the inhabitants object to parting with the money, is that it?"

"The secret cave is inhabited by a number of copper-colored natives bossed over by a white girl whom they call their queen," replied Blaine.

"The chap who saw the money told you that?"

The hard-looking sailor nodded.

"How do you know your friend wasn't giving you a fake yarn?"

"I knowed he was tellin' me the solemn truth, 'cause he happened to be dyin' when he told me, and that ain't no time for ringin' in any sea yarns."

"Then you believe the story?" said Jack.

"Of course I do, my hearty. I believe it so much that I'm goin' to that there island to get hold of the coin."

"You are, eh?" grinned Jack.

"Sartin, and I want ye two to go with me to help me git hold of the stuff. Ye shall have an ekal share of the coin, and ye won't need to work no more afore the mast nor abaft it, either, arter we git our flukes on to it."

This proposition took both boys by surprise, and they looked hard at the derelict as if they thought he was off his balance.

"Whereabouts is this island where the secret caves are?" asked Jack, curiously.

Bill Blaine fixed Jack with his wicked-looking eyes and then winked one of them after a cunning and knowing fashion.

"Ye shall know that in good time, my hearty," replied the sailor. "Ye must first agree to stand in with me. I'm puttin' ye on to this 'cause ye are a navigator, I've heard. We must go in our own hooker to that therè island—we three, and p'r'aps another chap whom I've spoken to about it. Four is aplenty to divide the gold between. Now d'ye understand?"

"Well, it's my opinion this thing is a wild goose chase at the best, and I'm not looking for such things."

As Jack's words indicated a practical refusal to engage in the enterprise, Bill Blaine's countenance took on an ugly look.

He had set his mind on having Archer to help him out, since he could do nothing without someone competent to navigate a vessel to the island in question, and he did not like to be balked in his plans.

"So you think it's a wild goose chase, do ye?" replied Blaine.

"It looks like it. Where did all this gold coin you speak about come from? What kind of coin is it? And why is it stowed away in secret caves on that island?"

"Ye are an eddicated lad, and p'r'aps ye've heard about the pirates of the South Pacific—the chaps that used to loot the Spanish and Portuguese vessels that sailed the sea in them days when sailin' vessels carried gold and silver ingots, as well as chests of money, as part of their cargos."

"I've read about those rascals. They were put out of business nearly a hundred years ago," replied Jack.

Bill Blaine nodded.

"The island with the secret caves was the headquarters of Vasquez, the rover of the south seas. He hid his stealin' in them caves, and it's there now, waitin' for us to git it and put it into circulation. That's the answer ye wanted, ain't it?"

It was a plausible one, certainly.

The south sea rovers were credited with having accumulated a large amount of plunder in the course of many years of pillage.

While they had found it easy after their fashion to acquire the booty, the spending of it was a horse of another color.

Most of them were marked men, or at least a strong suspicion was likely to attach itself to any individual bearing a nautical and desperate look who took it into his head to appear in a seacoast town with a considerable amount of loose coin in his possession for which he could not satisfactorily account, and consequently the spending of the plunder became a dangerous occupation.

After a number of examples had been made by the South American authorities of such chaps the rest became cautious of courting a similar fate, therefore, the booty, for the major part, remained hidden for better times, which never came.

Jack, being familiar with these facts, was willing to admit that a good part of the pirates' treasure might still be stored on some out-of-the-way island in the south seas, but for all that Bill Blaine's story and proposition did not appeal very favorably to his common sense.

Besides, he did not see how, even if he was disposed to fall in with the sailor's views, it was possible for him to engage in such a quest.

He supposed that Blaine's object was to secure a small vessel at Melbourne and sail off hundreds of miles into the treacherous latitudes of the south seas on a precarious hunt for an island that might easily elude their search in spite of his assumed knowledge of its position.

In order to do this he and Butch would have to sacrifice their berths on the Golden Fleece, thereby incurring Captain Rockwell's displeasure, and if the enterprise proved bootless, when they returned to Australia they would find themselves stranded in a foreign port, while his own prospects of becoming second mate under his generous patron would no doubt be sacrificed.

All these points passing before his mind, he stated them to Blaine as a sufficient excuse to offset his refusal to go into the scheme.

Blaine started to him with a malevolent grin.

"In the first place, it ain't my intention to go to Melbourne," said the sailor.

"Oh, is it?" chuckled Jack. "Going to jump overboard and swim somewhere else?"

The sailor glared at him.

"The island of Papua, one of the Fijis, ain't such a great distance from the island of the secret caves, and consequently we must go to Papua and start from there."

"That's all very pretty," replied Jack; "but even suppos-

ing we agreed to go with you, which isn't likely, how would we get to Papua? Captain Rockwell is not going to put in at that island and wait for us to go in search for your treasure."

"Don't ye worry about how we're goin' to git there," replied the dèrellict, slyly. "You kin leave that to me. All I want to know is, will ye jine with me if we get to Papua, or some other island near it?"

As the chances of the Golden Fleece coming to anchor off Papua, or any other island in the South Pacific, was exceedingly remote, Jack jokingly agreed that in that case they would go with Blaine in search of the treasure of the secret caves.

"Enough said," replied Blaine, his wicked eyes gleaming with satisfaction; "then the matter is settled."

"It's settled, all right," said Jack, with a chuckle; but, he meant in a difference sense than Bill Blaine did.

Just the same Jack and Butch were ticketed for the island of the secret caves, though they didn't dream of such a thing.

That it was even remotely possible for Bill Blaine to exercise any influence at all over the course of the Golden Fleece struck the boys as something ridiculously funny; and yet the wicked-looking sailor was figuring on just such a thing, and expected to bring the matter to pass.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THINGS BEGIN TO COME BILL BLAINE'S WAY.

Fine weather was the rule, and the Pacific Ocean maintained its reputation as a comparatively tranquil body of water; as the Golden Fleece sailed west and south toward the antipodes.

In due time she crossed the equator without being hecalmed, and entered the South Pacific.

The hot weather they encountered rather took the starch out of both Nellie and Richard Savage, who had all their lives been accustomed to the even climate of the middle Pacific slope.

The girl endured the sultry latitudes philosophically, but Richard was continually putting up a kick, which, however, didn't do him any good.

Soon after getting below the line Richard began to show an interest in the whereabouts of the ship.

Every day at noon the captain took his bearings by the sun, and then marked the position of the Golden Fleece on the chart.

Richard managed to be present when he did it, and the boy showed an increasing interest as the vessel drew nearer and nearer to the vicinity of the Fiji Islands.

He reported the ship's progress and her position day by day to Bill Blaine, either when he was at the wheel, or on some part of the deck.

His intimacy with that individual was remarked by the chief mate, who spoke to the captain about it.

Nellie had long since noticed it and mentioned its singularity to her father.

"He won't have anything to do with Jack, who saved his life, and is a boy of his own age," she said. "Yet with all his high-toned ideas he has made friends with that Blaine whom you saved from the sea when we were a week out from San Francisco. I cannot understand what interests him in that wicked-looking sailor."

"Nor I," replied her father, evidently annoyed. "I shall have to speak to him about it."

He did at the first opportunity, but Richard received his remonstrance in a sulky way.

He maintained his right to speak to anybody he chose on the ship, and as an excuse for talking to Blaine in particular, said that the sailor told very interesting stories, and he liked to listen to them.

The Fiji group lay in longitude 180; latitude about 18 S. This fact Richard had communicated to Blaine.

One morning when the ship was howling along within 300 miles of Papua Island the discovery was made that all the water casks were nearly empty.

The captain received the intelligence in some astonishment.

An investigation was ordered.

The chief mate and the carpenter conducted it.

They found that all the big casks, which were securely lashed on deck, had been punctured at the bottom by holes made by a large gnat, and that the water had leaked out of the barrels into the scuppers unnoticed.

Could someone aboard have done this, but who the guilty

party was, or what his object could be, it was impossible to determine, although Bill Blaine was suspected.

His bunk was quietly searched on the chance of finding the gimlet, but nothing came of it.

The captain was duly informed of the state of affairs, while the carpenter proceeded to plug up the holes in order to save the water that still remained in the casks.

Every member of the crew, including Blaine, was interviewed separately, and asked if he had seen any one hanging around the barrels during the night watches.

Butch Whitbeck and Jack had both seen Blaine lying apparently asleep between the barrels on different nights, and told the captain so.

Other members of the chief mate's watch, to which Blaine belonged, had also noticed the derelict hugging the barrels at night.

As a result of this testimony Blaine was believed to be the guilty man.

The chief mate tried to frighten a confession from him, but failed.

The rascal admitted that he had stowed himself around the casks frequently during the time he was on watch, but denied that he had tampered with the barrels.

As no proof could be brought against him nothing could be done to punish him.

After Captain Rockwell took his sights that day at noon, and had worked out the vessel's position and marked it on the chart, he ordered her course changed for the Island of Papua.

He might have selected one of the other islands for the purpose of taking water aboard, but as Richard Savage had expressed a wish to visit Papua he thought he would oblige him.

At dinner that day he told Richard that, owing to the unaccountable leakage of their water casks, he would anchor close in to the Island of Papua to take a fresh supply aboard.

Richard heard this with great joy, and subsequently passed the information on to Blaine, who stuck his tongue in his cheek and winked his wicked eye after a knowing manner.

At sundown the Golden Fleece was within a mile of the island, and then the last of the breeze left her.

Her sails hung motionless from the yards, while the vast ocean around her gradually subsided into a surface unbroken by a single ripple.

With the island close aboard, and the red face of the sun just vanishing behind the far-off water-line, the vessel looked like a "painted ship upon a painted ocean."

If it had been hot before, while the ship was bowling along under the influence of a steady wind, it was seemingly twice as hot with the air stagnant, even though the sun had gone to rest.

Darkness fell suddenly, with very little intervening twilight, in that latitude, but the unclouded sky was so brilliant with stars that one could see a considerable distance.

The island stood well defined before the gaze of all on board, and no one seemed to take such interest in it as Richard Savage.

Orders were given to unship the water casks in readiness for their transportation to the shore at sunrise, and this work was soon accomplished.

Short as the job was, the men perspired freely at it.

The boats were also cleared away, and now hung from their davits in readiness to be lowered at a moment's notice.

While the captain, chief mate and his passengers were at supper Jack and Butch hung lazily over the balwark, gazing at the island.

"So that's Papua," said Whitbeck. "One of the cannibal islands?"

"Yes, but the missionaries have about done away with those barbaric banquets that used to be a regular feature of the life of the natives."

"That's true, I guess; but many a missionary, I've heard, has been served up as a choice morsel for the chiefs before the practice was practically abolished."

"That's no lie, Butch. Twenty years and more ago shipwrecked sailors had every chance of going to pot here, as the saying is."

"Don't let's talk about it. You make my flesh creep," said Butch.

"Well, my hearties," said a voice behind them at that moment, "how does the island strike you?"

They did not need to turn around to recognize the speaker. It was Bill Blaine.

"In this light it looks like any other island of a similar size," replied Jack.

"Are we thinkin' of the cruise ye promised to make with me to the island of the secret caves?" chuckled Blaine.

"No, we are not thinking about anything so absurd," replied Jack, impatiently.

"Oh, ye ain't? Ye've not forgotten yer promise, have ye, that ye'd go if we got to Paqua, or some other island near it? Ye remember makin' it, don't ye, that night I told ye the story of them bushel-baskets of gold coin stowed away in the caves?"

Like a flash the promise came to them at that moment—a promise they never expected to be in a position to fulfill.

And now, after all, here they were at Papua, and the rascal was making it plain that he intended to hold them down to their work.

The boys were confounded, and gazed at each other in the dusk in a kind of dismay, for though there might be a million in gold at the island of the secret caves they were not infatuated with the idea of going after it.

"Well, supposing we did promise, and admitting that we have gone to Papua, where's the craft to be found to take us to your island?"

"Leave that to me, my hearties," said Blaine. "The craft ain't sich a great way off that'll do the trick in ship-shape fashion. Jest remember that there's several bushel-baskets of shinin' gold waitin' for each of us in that there island of the caves. That ought to make ye lick yer chops. Think of what ye kin buy with it? Ye won't need to work 'board an old hooker like this no more. Ye'll never want for nothin' as long as ye live."

The picture the artful rascal drew of the advantages of wealth quickened the boys' blood.

Where is there a man or boy who can resist the call of the yellow metal, or the silver metal, either?

Money, even though it be legalized paper, has a magnetism second to nothing else.

Jack and Butch now began to think with some seriousness about the alleged baskets of coin on the island of the secret caves.

Bill Blaine, perceiving that he had aroused their interest at last, moved away to consider his plans for the morrow.

CHAPTER IX.

TRAPPED.

Jack and Butch talked the situation over after Blaine left.

"I believe there's something in this thing, after all," said Whitbeck. "That chap wouldn't be so bent on going to the island if he wasn't almost cock-sure that there's gold there. And why shouldn't there be loads of it there if it once was the haunt of the south sea pirates? Those chaps didn't have much chance to spend their plunder. Well, if they didn't spend it, and it was not recovered by somebody long ago, it's there yet. The more I think about the matter the more I'm in favor of taking a shy at it. Here I'm working for a measly \$20 a month and my keep. So are you. Talk about basketfuls of gold, why, if I was sure of getting a tin pail full of yellow, boys, I'd be satisfied to make the trip. I tell you, Jack, this matter is well worth considering."

"Yes, that's all right. It wouldn't make so much difference to you if you did quit the ship right here. You've merely got your wages at stake, which you'd probably lose for breaking your contract with the vessel. It's different with me. Captain Rockwell is my friend and backer. He's taken an interest in me from the start. He would consider it base ingratitude on my part to skip away with you and Blaine, and perhaps another hand, for Blaine hinted that a fourth person was likely to go on this trip, and leave him short-handed in mid-Pacific. I tell you, Butch, money has as much attraction for me as for any one else; but there's something more valuable even than money."

"What's that?" asked Butch.

"A fellow's honor."

Four bells sounded the end of the first-dog watch, and the watch on deck was called to supper.

After Jack finished his meal he got permission from the captain to join Nellie and Richard on the poop.

The latter had scarcely spoken to him since the day he claimed that Jack had insulted him at the time he surprised Archer by addressing him in a very friendly manner.

Both Jack and Nellie regarded his sudden change of front with some surprise, but nevertheless they were pleased that he had shaken off his distant ways.

Of course they could not be expected to know that Richard was acting in conformity with instructions he had received from Bill Blaine, who had directed him to get on pleasant terms with Jack Archer for politic reasons.

Richard talked eagerly about the visit he expected to pay to the island next morning while the crew were filling the water casks, which was expected to take them at least half a day.

Nellie said she'd be delighted to go ashore with him, but somehow or another Richard objected to her company.

"It will be too hot for you in the sun, Miss Nellie," he said. "Besides Ben Blaine is going with me, and you don't like his company, you know."

"I don't believe papa will let you go with Blaine," pouted the girl.

"Yes, he will, for I'm going to have Jack and his chum Whitbeck to help row the boat."

"Well, if Jack is going with you I want to go too," she persisted. "I shall ask papa to let me. I can stand the sun as well as you. I haven't made half the fuss over the tropical weather that you have ever since we got near the equator. If you don't want my company, Jack will take me off your hands when we land, won't you, Jack?"

"Sure, I will," replied Jack.

In the face of the girl's persistency he didn't know what to do, and decided that he would have to see Blaine about it the first thing in the morning.

Accordingly, he got up earlier than was his custom and sought Bill Blaine, who had just finished doing his share of the work on the deck.

He told the sailor that the captain's daughter insisted on going ashore with them to see the island.

"She does, eh?" growled Blaine. "Well, we can't have her, d'ye understand?"

"I don't see how I can shake her off if her father gives her permission to go with us," replied Richard.

"Ye've arranged with the skipper to have me, Archer and Whitbeck in the boat, haven't ye?"

"That's all right, and we're to leave the ship right after breakfast is over in the cabin."

"If the girl says she'll come with us we'll take her over to where the men are filling the casks. We'll get her ashore there and then give her the slip. I'll hatch up some yarn to induce her to wait with the mate in charge till we get back. Then we won't come back," grinned Blaine. "We'll keep on rowin' till we reach the cove where the native village is, and where I expect to find the schooner we're goin' to take to sail to the island where the gold is."

The crew had their breakfast and then, with the exception of Blaine, Jack and Whitbeck, set off in two boats for the shore, towing an empty cask each.

The working gang was in charge of the second mate, and they were soon afloat and occupied with the business in hand.

After breakfast was over in the cabin, Richard came on deck prepared to accompany Blaine and the two sailor lads to the shore.

Nellie, having gotten permission from her father to go, too, also appeared with a wide straw hat on her shapely head.

Jack helped her into the boat as it hung at the davits.

Richard also got in and sat down near her.

Then the boat was lowered to the water.

Jack and Butch slid down the falls, and Blaine came last.

They shoved off and headed shoreward.

The island was a good-sized one, and the Golden Fleece lay off the uninhabited part of it.

As they rounded the shore a most remarkable spectacle of weird nature was presented to their eyes.

The ground rose abruptly from a wide, sandy beach in conical hills, with abrupt precipices, and crags of rock towering down like olden battlements.

Down a deep ravine-like indentation ran a stream of water, which was divided into a score of streams by shattered rocks here and there.

One of these branches emptied near the beach, and there the crew of the ship was filling one of the barrels.

Bill Blaine directed the boat to this point and beached her nose.

As a last thing the sailor Richard stepped ashore and assisted the girl out.

They walked up to where the men were holding the cask under the stream.

The rocks cast a delightful shade, and Nellie was helped to a seat by the mate.

After the lapse of five minutes Blaine called out to Richard, and he went down to the boat.

"Get aboard and we'll go along the shore a bit," said the sailor.

"Call Nellie," said Jack.

"Oh, never mind her," said Richard. "We'll be back in a little while."

Blaine pulled off and directed the course of the boat along close to the shore.

After proceeding about a quarter of a mile the aspect of the island began to change.

The barren rock, and fastidiously bright, melted away gradually into picturesque and rich groves, clumps of dark chestnuts, stately palms and bread-fruit trees, and patches of graceful bananas, all faring with the wild and luxuriant of the shore, and the far-stretching ocean beyond, pictures of surprising beauty.

They had already lost sight of the watering party, and soon a deep indentation in the shore carried them out of view of the ship as well.

Blaine, who was pulling the forward oars and guiding the boat to suit himself, aimed for a wide cleft in the rocks.

As they approached the place it was seen to form a passage deep enough to float a schooner, but barely wide enough for them to push the boat through.

Once in it there was no space to turn around and they had to keep straight on.

It wound in a serpentine way through a high point of the ground, which entirely cut off their view.

Jack and Butch were wondering when the long passage was going to end, and why Blaine had entered it, when the boat suddenly shot out into a small harbor at the end of the island opposite to that where the ship was anchored.

The shore and immediate vicinity was covered with rude huts occupied by natives, while in the center of a large open space stood the house of the missionary, who appeared to be the boss of the village.

A number of native craft were tied to the beach or anchored close by.

In their midst was a small, slender schooner, with a cut-water as sharp as a knife, while her two short masts had a decided rake.

She looked as if she had been built for speed.

Blaine headed the schooner directly for the craft, and as they drew near to her a man, whose face, if anything, was more villainous-looking than Blaine's, came up one of her small trunk cabin and looked over the side at the boat.

"Hello, shipmate," he sang out to Blaine: "where is thunder have you been all this time? I thought you'd given me the shake for good, and gone after that treasure on your own hook. But it wouldn't have done you no good, for you never could have found the secret cave without my help."

"Me shake you, Williams?" roared Blaine. "What d'ye think I am? I was carried north to the neighborhood of the Sandwich Islands by a brig I boarded."

"You was, eh?"

"I was, shipmate. Then the brig foundered and I would have gone to Davy Jones' locker if it hadn't been that I floated out'n danger on a hancoop, the only survivor of the brig. I was picked up by an American hooker bound for Melbourne."

"And where did you leave her?"

"On the other side of the island, where they are takin' aboard fresh water."

"You don't say! Step aboard, for I want to talk to you."

"I'm goin' to."

Blaine boarded the schooner and entered the cabin with the man, who appeared to belong to the vessel.

They were below a good twenty minutes, during which interval the three boys amused themselves looking at the native village.

When Blaine finally reappeared with the other chap, he told the boys to get on board the schooner.

Richard obeyed at once, but Jack and Butch objected.

"Ye needn't remain but a minute, my hearties," said Blaine, with a treacherous gleam in his eye.

As Richard was on the schooner the other two were finally persuaded to leave the main boat.

"How d'ye like this craft, anyway?" Blaine asked Jack.

"She looks to be a fast sailer," replied the boy, who had figured that fact up in his mind when he first saw her.

"Ye kin bet she is. This here is the hooker I told ye that I was ready to carry us to the island of the secret caves."

"Is that so?" asked Jack. "Well, just cut me out, will ye?"

"Cut ye out!" replied Blaine, with a wicked laugh. "I should say not. We've got to have a navigator, and ye are the boy for our money."

"I tell you I'm not going," replied Jack resolutely.

"Ye are not goin', eh? I say ye are goin'," said Blaine, in a threatening tone.

"Come on, Butch," said Jack, coldly. "Let's get out of this. Come along, Richard. We're going back to the ship."

Blaine grinned in an ugly way.

While he had been speaking to Jack, Williams, the other rascally-looking chap, had moved over to the side of the vessel, unshipped the rope which held the rowboat and cast it off, thus letting the small craft go adrift.

Consequently, when Jack and Butch reached the spot they saw the boat out of their reach.

"What does this mean?" demanded Jack, angrily. "Do you expect to detain us against our will?"

"If ye two won't go willin', ye'll go unwillin'. But go ye will, as sure as my name is Bill Blaine."

"We'll see about that," replied Jack, with a determined air. "I'll let no man, or rascal like you, walk on my neck if I can help myself. Follow me, Butch. We'll have to swim for that boat."

He made a dash to spring overboard when Williams, who had been watching him like a hawk, flung a heavy wooden belaying-pin at his head.

The blow took effect, and Jack went down on the deck stunned.

At the same time Bill Blaine sprang at Whitbeck and knocked him down.

Before the dazed young sailor could recover his faculties Blaine and Williams were tying his hands behind his back.

They treated the insensible Jack the same way.

Then they lifted each in turn and carried them down into the small fore-castle forward, which was a dingy hole not much larger than a good-sized drygoods case.

Slamming the scuttle down over their heads, the rascals secured it by means of a hasp and staple.

Having thus obtained the upper hand of their victims, they proceeded to cast loose the stops of the mainsail.

They hoisted this sail to the light breeze, and set the single jib.

Then they raised the anchor by means of a small horizontal drum windlass.

As soon as the anchor left the bottom the schooner began to drift with the tide toward the entrance of the little harbor.

The last thing the rascals did was to set the sprinker on at almost sail, by hauling up the gaff as far as it would go.

Bill Blaine took charge of the wheel and steered the schooner out on the bosom of the broad Pacific, pointing her nose to the southward.

The rascal was now in great good humor, for all his plans had succeeded to the letter, and he began to tell Williams about his adventures since the two parted company several weeks before.

CHAPTER X.

SAILING FOR THE ISLAND OF THE SECRET CAVES.

No attention was paid to Richard Savage, who, left to himself, walked aimlessly about the deck and finally seated himself on the rise of the cabin roof, with his back against the skylight.

Although he had been a witness to the treatment Jack and Butch Whitbeck had received from the two rascals, he had not put up the slightest remonstrance.

It wouldn't have made any difference if he had done so.

However, he had no interest in either of the young sailors, and, in addition, he entertained a personal grudge against Jack, so it didn't worry him in the least how the two rascals treated the boys.

He understood that Blaine was using them only for his own purpose, and that they were not to get any of the gold that he implicitly believed was hidden away in the secret caves of the island they were now bound for.

He congratulated himself over the fact that he would get a share of the treasure at any rate, and he began to build up castles about the money.

If he had only known that he was practically in the same boat with Jack and Butch, and that Blaine and Williams had not the slightest intention of dividing any of the gold with him, it would have greatly changed his views of the situation.

They simply meant to use him to strengthen their own side against Jack and Butch, and when the job had been put through they intended to abandon him to his own resources, the same as they proposed to treat the other two.

In other words, once they had the gold aboard the schooner they were going to maroon the three boys on the island of the secret caves to shift for themselves, and then sail back for one of the Fiji islands, take aboard provisions and set sail for New Zealand.

In the meanwhile Whitbeck came around soon after he and his companion had been put under hatches.

The blow Blaine gave him was a heavy one, and his head ached from the effects of it.

"The blamed rascals have got us dead to rights," he muttered, angrily. "I can hear them getting the schooner under way. Once they get off shore that will settle our chances of getting back in a hurry. I don't see but Jack and me had better make the best of things, help these chaps run the schooner to that treasure island, and if there's any gold there take our share, according to agreement."

The sunshine, stealing into the contracted fore-castle, if such a hole could be called by that name, showed him the unconscious form of his friend.

"It's hot as blazes down here," he muttered, as he set about the task of reviving Jack. "If they keep us very long down here we'll be baked as if we were in an oven."

In a little while Jack recovered his senses and sat up.

"Well, old man," said Butch, "you've woke up at last."

"Woke up!" repeated Jack, in a dazed kind of way. "Have I been asleep?"

"Kind of. You were laid out by a wooden belaying-pin."

It was some moments before Jack comprehended the situation, then everything came back to him.

"Where the deuce are we, Butch?"

"Why, aboard the schooner, of course. They put us down in this hole for'ard, to give us to understand that our name is Mud, and that we've got to knuckle down to them. They've got the vessel under way. Don't you feel the motion?"

It didn't take Jack but a moment to understand that he and Butch were at the mercy of Bill Blaine and his rascally companion, and the assurance was not a pleasant one.

"What did they do to Savage?"

"Blessed if I know. He didn't put up any fight, so maybe they didn't do anything to him."

"If they're carrying him off as well as we, he must have a fit," said Jack, ignorant of the fact that Richard had been standing in with Blaine right along.

At this point the scuttle was unlatched and thrown open. The boys looked up and saw the wicked countenance of Bill Blaine looking down at them in triumph.

"Well, my hearties, how are ye feelin' now?" he asked, with a grin.

"Are you going to let us out, or must we stay down here?" growled Butch.

"That depends on whether ye are ready to listen to reason or not," replied the sailor.

"What do you want?" demanded Jack, in a very bad humor.

"Ye know what I want without me tellin' ye ag'in. I want ye to navigate this schooner to the island where the gold is. Ye might as well agree, 'cause ye can't get back to yer ship now till the job is over. Besides, ye are goin' to git a fair share of the coin that's on the island."

"If there's any there."

"It's there, my hearty, or we wouldn't be goin' after it. Now, then, are ye goin' to jine with us and take yer share, or are ye goin' to ride rusty and force us to keep yer under hatches till ye diskiver there ain't no use buttin' ag'in a stone wall? If yer sensible I know what yer answer'll be."

"I don't see that we can help ourselves," replied Jack. "You're some distance off shore by this time, I suppose, and we can't leave the schooner."

"We're about two mile from the island, headin' sou'east."

"All right," said Jack. "We'll give in."

"Ye'll navigate the craft, will ye? We've got a chart and a quadrant in the cabin. Yer'll do yer best, will ye?"

"Yes," replied Jack.

"Now yer talkin', my hearty," replied Blaine, in a tone of satisfaction. "Ye are one of our kind, and ye'll jine with the others."

"What others? Your pal?"

"Him and Richard Savage."

"So Savage will come in, too, eh?" said Jack, in surprise.

"He'll have to work for it. He ain't a sailor, but he kin help carry the stuff aboard the schooner arter we find it. I reckon yer ship will wait at the island now till he gits back. That's a p'int I guess ye didn't figger on. As he's the owner's son the cap'n ain't likely to abandon him. So ye see there's no danger of ye losin' ther ship arter all."

That was certainly a comforting reflection for Jack and Butch, and went a long way toward reconciling them to the situation.

Blaine cut their arms loose and they came on deck.

The first thing they did was to look for the island and the ship.

Both were in sight, the Golden Fleece being all of two and a half miles distant.

"Come into the cabin and let's git down to business," said Blaine.

Jack, to whom the words were addressed, followed him below.

Blaine pulled a chart out of a locker and opened it out on the table.

"This here is a chart of this part of the ocean," he said. "That there island is Papua. That black mark represents about where the island is we're goin' to. It's only a small island, and if me and Williams tried to find it off-hand like, we'd be more'n likely to miss it. Now here's the latitude and longitude of it. Ye, with yer knowledge of navigation, ought to be able to take the schooner right to it."

"How far to the sou'east of Papua is it in a general way?" asked Jack.

"About a hundred miles*or so."

"With this light breeze we're not likely to cover that distance before this time to-morrow, so we won't pass it in the night. All we can do now is to keep right on as we're heading, as long as the island lies, in a general way, to the sou'east. To-morrow noon I'll take a sight and determine our position, and after that we'll work the schooner to the exact latitude and longitude you've marked down here."

"That's the ticket," said Blaine, nodding his head. "I know'd that ye could do it. It's a fine thing to be able to navigate a craft and make her go right where ye want her to."

The chart was put away, and shortly afterward the rascal Williams came below and laid out the table for dinner.

The repast was a very simple one, consisting of some rich yams, bread-fruit, bananas, and a refreshing, but intoxicating, native beverage called yugena.

Jack and Butch drank sparingly of the latter stuff, but Richard and the two men got away with a good bit of it.

Blaine and Williams were not much affected by their potations, because they were used to it, but Richard did not fare so well.

It took so much effect on him that in half an hour he was stupidly drunk, and he did not fully recover his normal senses until the next morning.

Jack, Butch, Blaine and his associate took two-hour spells at the wheel in turn, while the schooner sailed toward her destination at the rate of something less than ten miles an hour on the average.

Next day at noon Jack calculated the position of the schooner after using the quadrant, and marked it on the chart.

He found that the little craft was about thirty nautical miles from the point where the island was supposed to be.

He altered the schooner's course to conform to the new calculations, and told Blaine that they ought to sight the island about four o'clock at their present rate of sailing.

The rascal was well satisfied with this information.

He slapped Jack on the back, told him that he was all right, and then went to the wheel to communicate the good news to Williams.

CHAPTER XI.

A VISION OF LOVELINESS.

Richard continued on friendly terms with Jack and Butch, and the three boys kept to themselves, having little to say to the two rascals.

Jack, when he put the chart away after making his calculations at noon, discovered a loaded revolver in the locker.

Although he judged that it belonged to Williams, he took possession of it on general principles, for he had very little

confidence in the professions of friendship made by the men since he had yielded to their demands.

"It's always well to be on the safe side, if possible, and this gun may come in quite handy before this adventure is over," he said to himself.

As the afternoon passed away Blaine and Williams took turns in sweeping the distant sea-line with a ship's glass for a sign of the island.

At length, about three o'clock, Blaine, who was using the telescope, saw a small, cloud-like object lying upon the horizon.

Thereafter he and Williams did not lose sight of it for more than half a minute at a time.

It wasn't long before they made it out to be an island, and they had little doubt but that it was the one they were in quest of.

The boys were naturally much interested in the distant isle, but their interest was chiefly centered in the treasure they expected to find there.

Richard grinned to himself as he listened to Jack and Butch figure up what was likely to be the size of their shares.

"I wouldn't give much for what you'll get out of the treasure," he thought, with much satisfaction, for it pleased him to feel that the young sailors were going to get badly left, according to Blaine's programme, as he understood it.

At five o'clock they could see the island quite plainly.

It was hilly and rugged-looking, but the low ground was covered with rich vegetation, amid which plantain and coconut trees predominated.

The sun was setting by the time they were close aboard of the tropical isle, and it was almost dark when they made their way through an opening in the reef surrounding it and cast anchor in a little cove with a wide, sandy beach.

"We can't do nothin' to-night," said Blaine, "so we'll pipe to supper. We'll have to set a regular watch, because this here island is inhabited, and as there ain't no missionary here to boss the natives there ain't no sayin' what kind of a reception we might get if they took it into their ugly heads to pay us a visit."

This piece of information was not very palatable to the boys.

They had not figured on having a clash with the inhabitants of the island, having been impressed with the idea that the natives were friendly toward whites.

"I wonder how Blaine and Williams expect to bring that gold off, provided they find their way into the secret caves, without the natives getting wind of the operation?" remarked Jack.

"Give it up," replied Whitbeck, rather solemnly. "I'm thinking this job isn't going to be so easy as Blaine cracked it up to be. He ought to have brought a small arsenal along so that we could defend ourselves if attacked. To tell you the truth, I'm beginning to wish that I was out of this scheme. If a fellow has got to risk his life for the mere chance of getting rich, I hardly think it's a paying risk."

Richard didn't say anything, but he was decidedly uneasy at the prospect ahead.

He kept casting anxious glances shoreward through the gloom, and his excited fancy populated the underbrush with a crowd of copper-skinned rascals cannibalistically inclined, watching the schooner and making plans to capture all on board.

Butch Whitbeck remained on deck while the rest went to supper.

All meals were alike on board the schooner, the only difference being in the name applied to them, for there was no change in the food.

The breeze, which had almost died out with the sun, came on again from another quarter about an hour after dark, and made the sultry air fairly bearable.

The sky was bright with stars, and their moonlight made the island stand out in relief.

Not a sound could be heard other than the low beat of the surf upon the reefs, which almost surrounded the isle.

"Well, Richard, how do you suppose you'll feel if the inhabitants of this place capture us on our gold-hunting expedition to-morrow?" said Jack, noticing how nervous the young aristocrat appeared to be. "Would you sooner be roasted, boiled or fried?" he added, with a chuckle.

"I don't see anything funny about the matter," grumbled Richard. "I wish I was back on board the Golden Fleece."

"You aren't the only one who wishes that," said Jack. "There has been talking in the crew ever since Blaine told them he was going to take a chance on a fortune as big as the one they were after. If they discovered us—"

"Oh, you go bag your head," growled Whitbeck. "I ain't shaking any more than you are. I'm ready to take my chances with the rest. I wish I had a good gun, though. I'd feel a little more secure."

"I think a Gatling rapid-firer wouldn't be out of place," said Jack. "It would make a crowd of warlike cannibals look like thirty cents inside of a couple of minutes."

"Do you think these islanders are cannibals?" asked Richard, in shaky tones. "I thought the natives of these islands were all converted."

"You'd better ask Blaine. He can tell you more about this part of the world than I can. If he really thought the inhabitants of this island were very dangerous I don't think he'd have taken the chances of coming here for a gold mine. I know I wouldn't. Money is all very well, but a fellow's life is more valuable," said Jack.

"Those are my sentiments, too," interjected Butch, with a nod of his head.

The boys talked till they grew sleepy, and then they turned in after Jack was told that he would have to stand watch from midnight till three, and Butch was informed that he would have to hold the deck from three until relieved.

Soon after sunrise Blaine and Williams turned out of their bunks.

After breakfast both appeared on deck with rifles in their hands.

A third rifle was handed to Richard.

"We're goin' to leave ye in charge of the schooner," said Blaine. "If any of the natives try to board the vessel you must wave 'em off. If they won't obey ye, jest shoot 'em, d'e understand?"

Richard said he understood, but he didn't look very formidable even with the gun in his hands, and Jack thought the resistance he would put up if attacked would not amount to a whole lot.

The rowboat that the schooner carried on her deck was lowered into the water and the party of four rowed away, leaving Savage lord of all he surveyed.

When the boat touched the beach all jumped out, and she was secured to a stake driven into the sand.

Blaine and Williams took the lead with their guns ready for business at a moment's notice.

Jack and Butch trailed on close behind.

In that order they walked up the shore, and penetrating the underbrush, started inland.

The rascals seemed to have a well-defined idea of where they were heading for.

They talked together in low tones, but neither Jack nor Butch could catch what they said.

In fact, their attention was taken up by a constant lookout for the appearance of any stray inhabitants of the island.

Not a sign of life other than birds of variegated plumage, was to be seen, however.

They proceeded in this manner through a comparatively level growth of tropical forest for a distance of perhaps half a mile.

Then they came to a circle of hills rising in a singularly abrupt fashion, not unlike the walls of some huge fortress.

To climb these elevations looked to be simply impossible.

Blaine and his companion evidently had no intention of attempting to climb them, but, instead, they began to advance along their base with some caution, peering into every bunch of underbrush they came to, and around every projection they encountered in their path.

"I'll bet they're looking for the opening to the secret caves," said Jack, after taking note of the actions of the two

"Of course that's what they're doing," replied Whitbeck.

"If this island is inhabited it seems funny that we haven't met with a single specimen of the natives," said Jack.

"Their village may be on the other side of the island."

"It certainly does not appear to be on this side," admitted Jack.

"I don't know how we can get to the other side of the island and our approach to the other end, except by way of the beach."

"That's what they do. I should hate to have to climb them. In fact, I doubt very much if we could do such a thing without a regular mountain-climber's outfit."

At that moment Blaine and Williams came to a sudden stop before a clump of tropical bushes.

They parted the foliage with evident caution and looked through.

Then, turning to the boys to keep close behind, they pushed their way through.

Jack and Butch followed.

Suddenly they appeared to be walking straight into the hill.

In another moment they found themselves in a tunnel which was as dark as the ace of spades.

They followed the windings of this for some little distance and then they saw light ahead.

That indicated the end of the tunnel.

When they came to the point of exit they found themselves gazing into a small amphitheatre-like space open to the sky.

Plantain trees were growing around it at such regular intervals as seemingly to indicate that they had been set there by human hands.

The ground was thickly carpeted with verdure, but instead of growing wild as in the other part of the island they had traversed, it was cut close like a well-kept lawn around a gentleman's house.

A stream of water of small volume leaped from crag to crag at one side of the enclosure until it reached a kind of basin, partly natural and partly formed by man.

Sitting on a rock beside this crystal pool and arranging her long, golden locks was a young, slender girl of uncommon beauty.

She was dressed in soft, flowing, white garments, caught at the waist by a girdle of pure gold, which glittered with a myriad of diamonds.

A pair of white sandals protected her exquisitely-formed feet.

Around her neck and hanging down nearly to her waist was a pendant chain formed of a combination of large diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones.

A sort of tiara, in the center of which shone an immense ruby, was affixed in the top of her hair, while rings of great value glittered on her taper fingers.

She was entirely alone to all appearances, and the intruders regarded her with surprise and not a little wonder.

Blaine and Williams were not impressed by her artless loveliness, but by the immense value of her ornaments, which clearly looked to be worth several large fortunes.

The boys, on the contrary, while sensible of the glittering character of her gems, were spell-bound at the presence of such a beautiful white girl in that rugged, garden-like spot.

Jack was especially taken with her.

As she sat there in graceful unconsciousness that her privacy was invaded by strangers, two of whom were as big a pair of rascals as the sun ever shone upon, she presented a picture that completely captivated the young sailor.

It might almost be called a case of love at first sight on his part.

Blaine and his companion viewed her, as we have said, with merely mercenary emotions.

The wealth she carried on her person drove from their thoughts for the time being the money whose hiding place they were trying to locate.

They saw within their grasp the value in a very portable form of many thousands of golden coins, and with one accord they decided to seize the girl, choke her into helplessness, and strip her of every ornament.

This purpose was decided between them in whispers, and standing their rifles against the wall of the tunnel they crept out of the opening and cautiously approached the beautiful creature.

Jack was so absorbed in the contemplation of the girl's ravishing beauty, both of face and form, that he did not pay any attention to the actions of the two sailors until they came into his line of vision behind the girl.

Then instinctively he understood their object.

Forgetful of the circumstances surrounding him—conscious only of the peril that faced this lovely girl—all the natural chivalry of his manly nature at once asserted itself.

He sprang forward to her assistance as though she were his dearest friend and not an absolute stranger.

At that moment Blaine seized her roughly with a grapple hold around the neck while Williams started to tear an ornament from her hair.

His fingers had barely touched it when Jack swung a

swinging blow in the jaw that sent him reeling to the ground.

Then he tore Blaine's clutch from around the girl's neck, and smashed him, too, a stunning blow in the face.

Throwing one arm protectively around the beautiful girl, Jack drew his revolver and put himself in a posture to defend her from further aggression.

CHAPTER XII.

TITANIA.

Williams sprang to his feet with a fierce imprecation, which was echoed by Bill Blaine as that rascal also recovered from the smash he had received from the plucky boy.

The sight of the revolver in Jack's hand alone deterred them from throwing themselves upon him and doing him up in their rage.

"Ye blamed young monkey, what do ye mean by sluggin' us?" roared Blaine, in a furious passion, his wicked eyes sparkling with fury.

"Blame you!" snarled Williams. "We'll kill you for that!"

"Stand back!" cried Jack, resolutely. "If you move a step nearer I'll fire, and your blood will be on your own heads."

His manner and words showed that he meant business, and the rascals were loath to take the risk that seemed to be certain.

"How dare ye interfere with us?" demanded Blaine, fiercely. "Ye are one of us. What do ye mean by balkin' our plans?"

"Your plans have nothing to do with this girl. I did not agree to back you up in any such outrage against a defenseless woman as you have just attempted. You came to this island to search for hidden gold, not to assault and rob one of the inhabitants."

"We're not takin' any instructions from ye," hissed Williams. "Give that girl up to us or we'll carve ye into strips!"

The rascal drew his sheath-knife, and Blaine immediately followed his example.

"You'll reach this girl only over my dead body, you scoundrels," replied Jack, determinedly. "And before I go down one or both of you will get a ball into you that may settle your fate."

The discomfited rascals recognized the fact that lead travels quicker than steel, and they did not dare force the matter to an issue.

At this point Whitbeck, recovering from his surprise over what had happened, grabbed up one of the rifles left by the scoundrels at the mouth of the tunnel, and came forward to the aid of his chum.

"Drop those knives, both of you," he said, covering Blaine and Williams with his weapon. "Drop them, quick, or there'll be something doing you won't like."

The rascals, perceiving themselves menaced from another quarter, gave utterance to a string of fierce invectives, and swore to be terribly revenged on both of the young sailors.

Their oaths and threats had no effect whatever on either Jack or Butch.

The villains, however, sullenly refused to give up their knives, returning them to their sheaths in a dogged manner.

During all this time the girl had stood a passive participant in the thrilling scene.

Recognizing Jack as one who had saved her from the ruffianly assault, and whose presence and weapon protected her from further harm at the hands of the scoundrels, she did not seek to withdraw herself from his encircling arm, even after she had fully recovered her self-possession.

When Jack saw that Blaine and Williams were effectually subdued for the time being, at any rate, he took his arm from around the girl's waist and turned to her.

"You are quite safe now, miss," he said, without considering whether she understood his words or not.

"I am not a miss," she replied, in perfect English, flashing a look of gratitude and interest in his face that thrilled him, for her eyes were beautiful and expressive ones, and their glances went straight to his heart.

"You are welcome, miss. I am very glad to have been of service to you."

"What is your name, and whence do you come?" she asked, in her silvery tones.

"My name is Jack Archer. I am an American, from San Francisco."

"I, too, am an American," she replied, sweetly; "but this is my home. My name is Titania. I am queen of the Titanians, who inhabit this island."

"Titania!" exclaimed Jack. "And what is your other name?"

"I may not tell you. What brought you to this island? It is not often that any one comes hither. Was it to get water for your ship?"

"No," replied Jack. "We did not come on a ship, but

in a small schooner from the Island of Papua, about 100 miles to the northwest."

"What brought you to this island? There is nothing here to repay your visit. My people do not encourage the presence of strangers. How came you to find the passage that leads to our dwelling place? Only once before did a stranger penetrate to this spot, and he did not well repay the hospitality which I, contrary to my people's wishes, extended to him."

"We came here for——"

Then Jack stopped, for it flashed across his mind that it might be unwise to admit the real object which had brought the party to the island.

The girl seemed to read his thoughts and smiled.

"Perhaps I can guess," she said. "The stranger who asked our hospitality has told that there is a treasure on this island, concealed in our secret caves, and you and these men came here to try and take it away. Am I not right?"

"I will not deny it," replied Jack, flushing guiltily. "We did come here to obtain the treasure, which we understand consists of many thousand pieces of gold coin. That rascal there, whom we, that is, the officers and crew of the ship Golden Fleece, bound from 'Frisco to Melbourne, and now at the Island of Papua, rescued from the sea more than a thousand miles northeast from here, told my chum here and I the story of this gold. He induced us, by force, backed by his promise to give us an equal share of whatever treasure was secured, to accompany him on a schooner from Papua to this island. We anchored off the eastern end of the island last evening, and this morning the four of us came ashore to search for the hidden caves."

"Your search would have been in vain. You could not have passed these natural barriers of our dwelling place without discovery, and discovery might perhaps have meant a quick and sudden death. I alone, who could have saved you, would probably never have heard of your fate."

"Then I suppose there is nothing for us to do but to return to the schooner by the way we came," replied Jack, with a wistful and admiring look into her lovely face, which brought a heightened color to her cheeks. "I am afraid that will not be well for my companion and myself, particularly for me. I have foiled these two rascals in their attempt to rob you of your gems and ornaments. They will hold me responsible for the failure of the enterprise as a whole. They are desperate rascals, as you may judge by their appearance and their actions. It is not improbable that my life, as well as that of my chum, may be sacrificed to their folly as they get on board the schooner. Under these circumstances I would ask your protection, as I have given you mine when you stood in need of it. I ask that we may be permitted to remain with your people until some passing vessel can be signalled to take us off."

"Your request is granted," she said, softly, taking his hand in hers. "My gratitude would not permit me to expose you to danger, and when I have told my people what I owe you they also will welcome you. You shall both remain as long as you wish, or as long as circumstances may compel you."

Jack brightened up at her words.

In a few short minutes this girl had produced such an impression on him that he would have regarded it as a misfortune to be obliged to leave her.

At that moment a young native girl appeared suddenly from behind a screen of tropical foliage which hid an inner passage.

She uttered a startled exclamation as her eyes lighted on the four strangers.

Titania turned and spoke some words to her in a strange, but musical, language.

She turned about instantly and disappeared.

"I thank you very much, Miss Titania," replied Jack, in answer to the girl's speech. "My chum and I will gratefully accept your hospitality until such time as an opportunity occurs for us to get away. As for those rascals, the sooner we get rid of them the better."

As the girl turned away, a small, dark, and slender figure, clothed in short, fringed, and very peculiarly patterned garments, very similar to the uniform of an American naval officer, appeared from the inner passage.

He bowed to the four strangers, in the name of Titania and bowed to the girl.

She then turned to the native language, pointing to Blaine and Williams, and finally to Butch Whitbeck.

They bowed their heads again when she had finished.

Blaine and his companion, not liking the outlook, started for the mouth of the tunnel.

"Stop!" cried Titania, authoritatively, to them.

They paid no attention.

"Hold them up with your rifle, Butch," said Jack.

Whitbeck sprang on the rascals to stop, covering them with his weapon.

They did so, with very bad grace.

"Better get that other rifle in your possession, Butch," said Jack. "It's too dangerous a weapon for those rascals to have."

Whitbeck took the hint, moved over to the tunnel and secured it.

He brought it back and tossed it to Jack.

The queen of the Titanians then turned to Butch and told him to go with the party that would escort Blaine and Williams back to the beach near where the schooner lay at anchor, and after seeing that the rascals returned to their vessel he was to come back with the natives.

"All right," replied Whitbeck, glancing at Jack. "Why not come with me, old man?"

Titania shook her head and ordered the escort to proceed at once.

One of the natives, who appeared to have command of the others, spoke to his companions.

They marched toward the tunnel.

Two entered and disappeared.

The native looked at Blaine and Williams and motioned them to enter the passage.

Blaine turned a ferocious look on Jack.

"Ye've got the best of us, my hearty," he hissed; "but we're not done with ye yet, by a long chalk! We'll git ye yet, and when we do ye'll wish ye'd never been born!"

With this parting salute the two sailors walked off, accompanied by Butch Whitbeck and the copper-colored escort.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DAWN OF LOVE.

Left together, Titania turned to Jack, took his hand once more in hers and carried it to her lips.

"You are my guest, Jack Archer," she said, with a look that quickened the blood in his veins, and caused him to seize her hand and carry it to his own lips.

She smiled almost coyly and said, "Come."

He followed willingly enough as she led the way to the inner passage.

Her movements were graceful and supple as she preceded him along the natural passage open above until they entered a second winding tunnel which terminated in a large cave facing upon a valley completely enclosed by the inaccessible hills.

Several natives were sitting around the cave.

All sprang to their feet on the appearance of their queen, and saluted her with the most profound respect.

She passed on out of the cave with Jack at her side.

"This is the home of the Titanians," she said, waving her fair, undraped arm at a large collection of small thatched huts scattered about the tropical valley.

A part of the valley was under special cultivation, a species of maize being grown there, as Jack subsequently ascertained.

There were bread-fruit, plantain, banana and cocoanut trees on all sides.

Birds of brilliant plumage flew hither and thither, and seemed to be extremely tame.

The hillsides were resplendent with tropical vegetation of every description.

Everything spoke of peace, plenty and contentment.

Jack was delighted with the scene thus unfolded before his eyes.

It seemed to be a fitting setting for the lovely girl who reigned queen of that little community, cut off as it were from the rest of the world.

"My gracious!" exclaimed the young sailor. "I believe I could live here forever and be perfectly satisfied."

She turned a look of sweetness on the boy and smiled.

A soft light shone from her eyes as they rested with an eager longing on his handsome face, that strong, well-proportioned figure.

For a moment she was lost in her dream, and her bosom rose and fell like the undulations of the great ocean without.

Jack's eyes were at that moment taking in all the beauties of the valley, and he was not conscious of the emotions reflected in this innocent maiden's person, as she gazed at him with an admiring and newly-born interest.

"Come," she said at length, "I will take you to my house. There I hope you will find yourself at home at last."

She hesitated and her voice trembled a bit.

"Until you tire of us here," she added, "and long to return to those you love and who love you."

"There is no one that I love," he said, turning to her, "and no one who loves me. I am an orphan."

A bright light sprang into her eyes as he uttered those words.

"Then were you to remain with us no one would miss you?" she asked, eagerly.

"Yes, there are friends who would miss me in a way. Captain Rockwell, who has been almost a father to me, and his daughter Nellie, who has been almost a sister to me."

"Ah!" exclaimed Titania, her face going pale. "They would miss you, you say, and you—you would miss them. This Nellie, who is like a sister to you—you care for her, no doubt? It would grieve you to see her no more, perhaps?"

"Sure, I care for her. She is the best, the truest-hearted little girl in all the world," he said, enthusiastically. "I should not like to lose her altogether. She is the best friend I have. But she is not like—you."

Titania stood with averted face and sinking heart as Jack spoke with such fervor of Nellie Rockwell.

Her disappointment was keen until he said, "But she is not like—you."

At those words she raised her head and shot an indescribable glance at him.

"Come," she said, once more, "follow me."

She led him, an object of wondering curiosity to the men, women and children of the Titanians, along a wide lane through the village to a large thatched structure of a single story, which stood in the center of an extensive green space, well shaded by spreading palms.

There was no lack of ventilation in the building, a necessary requirement of that hot latitude.

The house consisted of one large central room, and three others that led off from it, like the pips of the ace of spades.

The furniture consisted of rustic-looking chairs, tables, lounges and other civilized adjuncts, probably secured from wrecked ships.

The floor was constructed of the deck timbers of a large vessel, which had been as closely knit together as when they were in their original position.

The doorways were hidden by portieres of some soft, clinging silk—a fabric similar to that worn by the girl herself.

Coming out of the blazing sun, Jack was astonished at the comparative coolness of the big room to which Titania had introduced him.

Pointing to a couch made of interwoven cane, she called two of a half-dozen young female attendants and bade them bring refreshments.

Then she seated herself beside Jack and asked him to tell her something about himself, and of his voyage from San Francisco to the Island of Papua.

He complied at once, and while he was talking the two girls waited on them, one with golden and silver plates and dishes filled with tropical fruits, the other with an antique looking flagon filled with a rich amber-colored liquid which she served in a couple of silver goblets of exquisite workmanship to Titania and her visitor.

Jack was astonished at the display of plate until an explanation of their presence on this out-of-the-way island occurred to him.

Without doubt they were a part of the pirate booty of a hundred years since, which the girl's queen had turned to practical use.

Jack gave Titania an outline of his life history, and she listened to him with rapt attention.

When he spoke about Nellie Rockwell, and the warm friendship that existed between them, the girl watched his face narrowly, and weighed every word as it fell from his lips, as if to determine in her own mind just what place Nellie occupied in the boy's heart.

Sometimes her hand was pressed upon her bosom as though to stifle her emotion, and again her face glowed with a dawning hope.

While they were thus engaged the queen of natives had accompanied Blaine and Williams to the beach, and had returned to the house with Butch Whitbeck and the copper-colored escort.

"Hello, Butch," exclaimed Jack, as soon as he saw his chum, "come in and make yourself at home."

"Draw up a chair, old man," continued Jack, as if he was the boss of the house, "and tell us how you got rid of those rascals."

"Oh, we got rid of them all right, don't you worry," laughed Butch, with an admiring glance at Titania. "We marched them back to the beach as if we were taking them to execution. They didn't say a thing about you—oh, no, of course not! I'd hate to have you meet either of those chaps of a dark night on a lonesome road. What they wouldn't do to you isn't worth mentioning. They called you every name in the calendar, and swore they'd kill you at the first chance they get. And I guess they wouldn't be bashful about treating me in the same way."

"Say, old man," continued Butch, "this is the finest place I've ever seen. I wouldn't mind living here indefinitely."

"Wouldn't you? I feel kind of that way myself, only I'm afraid Miss Titania wouldn't stand for it."

"I should be very happy if you would remain here forever," she answered.

After some further conversation Titania signified her intention to tell the boys her story.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY THAT TITANIA TOLD.

Titania's story was quite a long one as she related it, but a few words will place the substance of it before our readers. Her father and mother were Americans, and she herself was born in California.

While yet a very little girl her father met with business reverses that reduced the little family to unpleasant straits.

A good position having been offered her father in Sydney, Australia, he set sail for the antipodes on an American ship, with his wife and child.

All went well until the vessel reached the neighborhood of the Fiji Islands, when she was caught in one of the periodical hurricanes that sweep those seas.

Driven southward in the grasp of the tempest, the vessel went ashore on the reefs surrounding the Island of Titania.

Strange to relate, all on board perished except Titania and her father and mother, who were washed up on the beach more dead than alive.

There they were discovered by the natives of the island, who carried them into their secluded village and treated them with great kindness, for the islanders were a simple and inoffensive race of aborigines who had settled there soon after the extinction of the pirate Vasquez and his villainous associates a hundred years before.

The Island of Titania being out of the beaten track of vessels sailing between America and Australia, the girl's father waited long and anxiously for some craft to draw near enough to take them off.

As weeks passed into months few ships came within signaling distance, and none of these paid any attention or understood the signs made.

Her father ceased to watch for vessels in the offing and both he and his wife devoted their lives from that time to teaching the inhabitants the Christian faith, and instructing them in such civilized pursuits as their limited facilities enabled them to put into practice.

They picked up the language of the Titanians, and taught the head people something of the English tongue.

Finally at the annual festival held by the natives, Titania's father was made king of the island, her mother queen, and she herself declared heir apparent.

A few years after this a brig was blown into the neighborhood by a gale and came to anchor within the reef.

The captain and crew of this craft were a rascally set.

It developed that they had been looking for this island which they knew had once been the headquarters of the pirate Vasquez.

They believed that some of the booty of that famous rover might still be concealed on the island, and their purpose was to discover it and carry it away.

In searching the place they accidentally discovered the secret entrance to the valley and forced their way into the village.

In doing this they killed several of the islanders who had approached them with peaceful intentions.

Titania's father, while remonstrating with the invaders, was shot down in cold blood by the captain of the brig.

This wanton act naturally enraged the natives, a pitched battle ensued and the intruders were wiped out to a man.

The brig was taken possession of by the islanders, broken up and removed with her furnishings and such cargo as she had to the village, where the various articles were put to such use as the inhabitants could manage to employ them.

Titania's mother only survived her husband a short time, and the little girl, thus left an orphan, was duly proclaimed queen of the island under the name of Titania.

An old custom of the natives forbade her, on accession to the dignity of queen, from ever mentioning the name of her father and mother, and this custom she felt bound to respect, and consequently she could not impart that information to her guests to whom, she said, she must ever be known simply as Titania.

"All right, Titania," said Jack, when she had concluded her story, "we'll let it go at that. Now, if you will favor us so much, will you tell us if there really is a large amount of gold coin concealed in secret caves on this island?"

"There is," she replied.

"And where are these secret caves located, if I may be permitted to ask?"

"That no stranger is allowed to know. Even the natives, save six, who night and day guard the secret entrance, are not acquainted with the secret. I alone possess the right to enter the caves at will, and the six guards may accompany me or not, as I choose."

"Then, as long as you live no other eyes but yours, the guards excepted, can get a look at that treasure?" said Jack.

"One other may."

"One other?" exclaimed Jack. "And who is that?"

"The man I choose for my husband and king."

"Gee. He'll be a lucky chap," said Whitbeck. "I wish I could step into his shoes," he added, with a grin.

Jack made no reply.

He sat silently gazing out through the doorway at the native children playing at a distance among the huts, thinking of the girl's strange and eventful story, and perhaps more of the girl herself—the most fascinating creature he had ever seen in his life, and whose personality had made a great impression on his heart.

And while the boy was occupied with his thoughts Titania rose and ordered dinner to be prepared for herself and her guests.

Then she sent for the three old and wise men of the village, who formed her council of state, as it were, according to the regulations governing the colony.

When they appeared she met them just outside the door, for they never entered her house.

To them she described how Jack Archer had saved her from being despoiled of her ornaments by Blaine and Williams, and how his chum, Butch Whitbeck, had backed him up.

She explained that the four had come to the island to search for the treasure of the secret caves.

Then she introduced her guests to the old men, indicating Jack as especially entitled to all honor and respect on the part of the inhabitants.

The old men departed and by the time Titania and her guests sat down to dinner the whole village knew what their queen owed to Jack, and incidentally his friend.

CHAPTER XV.

A YOUNG GOLD KING.

The boys turned out early next morning just as the sun was rising.

The natives were just beginning to stir around as they came out of the house.

"I don't suppose breakfast will be ready for a couple of hours yet, so I move that we climb up the hill yonder and take a squint at the ocean," said Butch.

The slope was easy to climb and it did not take them long to reach the ridge.

From there they could see the Pacific rippling in the early sunshine spread out all around them clear to the encircling horizon.

"I wouldn't care to be in Richard's shoes at the present moment," said Jack. "Those scoundrels are probably making life hideous for him for want of something better to vent their disappointment on."

"Well, Jack, when our ship turns up, as I suppose she will, are you going back to sailing again?" asked Butch.

"Why do you ask that?"

CURRENT NEWS

A mysterious woman, living alone in a cabin in the sand dunes of Porter County, Ind., has attracted attention. She takes daily dips in Lake Michigan without a bathing suit. She is said to be either a Chicago teacher who disappeared two years ago, or an heiress of Walla Walla, Wash., who has been missing from her home two years.

A mule belonging to Claude Ridgway, of La Habra, Cal., and which usually subsists on hay, was found recently making away with a half-grown chicken. In spite of every known inducement to desist, he continued to munch chicken until the last feather had disappeared. Whenever he has a chance now, he dines surreptitiously on spring chicken.

How an old hen that had built her nest in their threshing machine and was not disturbed from her motherly duty by the grinding and whirring of the machinery is an incident being related by Scott Brothers, of near Bentleyville, Pa. More than seventy-five bushels of grain had been sorted from the straw and chaff, when they had occasion to examine the inside of the machine. To their surprise they found the hen covered with dust and chaff, sitting on her nest.

A heavy draught horse of Allentown, Pa., enacted the role of a pickpocket recently. The discovery of the horse's crime was made by his driver, Wayne Wenner, who, while driving along the street, saw a gold watch and chain dangling from the animal's tail, and the theory is that as Prince switched his tail to keep off the flies he extracted the time-piece from the vest pocket of a pedestrian. Wenner is looking for the owner of the watch.

The new German War Usury Bureau has justified its existence by uncovering widely ramified food frauds, according to reports received at London. The frauds are said to involve a half dozen leaders and 100 accomplices, who smuggled hundreds of tons of wheat, rye and barley flour from the Province of West Prussia to Berlin, where it was sold at a profit of 300 per cent. The flour was concealed from Government stock takers by shipping it on night trains as potatoes or machinery. Among the men involved were Government officials.

Perched twenty feet in the air, an old hen on the farm of former United States Marshal John Cannon Short, of Georgetown, Del., has hatched out ten chicks where the whole family is now making their aerial home. The nest is in a large tree and is reached by a forty-foot ladder which lies against an adjoining building. The hen climbed the ladder and made her nest in the tree, and there she hatched

out her family. So far, the chicks have not yet set their feet on the ground, and the old hen carries their food up to them. The owner highly prizes the hen, and will allow no one to disturb her unique abode.

The trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of McGregor, Iowa, have taken effective means of inducing Sunday attendance in posting the following notice in the churchyard: "It cost the Methodist Church considerable to maintain a drainage ditch around the church in order to keep the water from flooding the basement. Parties are in the habit of digging earth worms in this ditch, which causes the water to run into the basement. This practice must be stopped at once. By order of the church board." Anglers say the trustees know the churchyard is the only good place to dig worms in McGregor, and that no one can go fishing Sundays without bait.

A cave in which, on a solid rock wall, there is the imprint of a human hand as if it were made when the rock was plastic has been discovered on the farm of John W. Weist, in Dry Rock Canyon, eight miles northwest of Vernal, Utah. On the rock are all sorts of hieroglyphics, and the cave contained the skeleton of a child wrapped in bark, Indian fashion. In removing ash heaps, Weist found corn cobs, a few grains of corn and an arrow of cane spiked with greasewood. He regrets now that he did not preserve the kernels of corn and plant them in hope that corn of an ancient culture might be again produced, but at the time he thought, of course, their presence among the ashes precluded the possibility of life germs being retained. The arrow was kept, but the bark-wrapped skeleton was put into a five-gallon can and buried.

Roger Newton, a University of Wisconsin graduate, of Globe, Ariz., has discovered that his wife he married nine years ago, is his sister. Newton, whose real name is George Porter, is the son of a carpenter in Spokane, Wash. When his father was injured, George was placed in an orphanage. He was adopted later by Howard Newton, who moved East. His adopted parents educated him at the University of Wisconsin. After leaving college, Porter, who had taken the name of Newton, returned to the Pacific Northwest. While in Portland, Ore., he married Miss Elizabeth Porter. The other day Newton found a lock of hair in an old trunk. He opened it and found a tintype of his parents. When he showed it to his wife, she fainted. The picture was one of her own father and mother. She had known of a brother, but had never heard what had become of him.

TURNED OUT WEST

OR

THE BOY WHO FOUND A GOLD MINE

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII (Continued).

He straightened up after supper, however, and full of enthusiasm over the ghost plan.

"Buck Sheehan must think that we have all gone on the run," he declared. "He can't think anything else. Let's see if we can't fix them for good and all to-night."

Ten o'clock was the time settled upon, and shortly before that hour the boys and their lawyer ventured into the tunnel once more, Leon carrying the lantern turned down to a mere glimmer.

They pushed on until they came to the white pillars, and extinguishing the light, after putting on the priests' cassocks, sat down to wait.

"We will give them an hour," declared Leon. "If they don't come by eleven we must pay them a visit outside."

Time slipped by, and as there was nothing doing, Leon lit his lantern again.

"It is only about half an hour," said Jack. "What are you about?"

"Going out to see if they are ever going to get on the move."

"You had better stop here. Don't you think so, Pete?"

But the lawyer was not thinking.

No answer coming, Leon flashed the lantern in his face to discover that Pigeon was sound asleep.

"Stop where you are. I won't be gone a moment," said Leon. "You get him awake in the meantime."

He hurried forward to the mouth of the tunnel and looked out.

In a moment Jack saw the flash of his lantern returning.

"Ha! Here comes the explorer! What news?" called Pigeon, whom Jack had been punching up.

"Get ready, quick, you fellows!" called Leon. "It's a good job I went. The whole party is on their way up the hill with lanterns. They are coming to look for the ghosts."

CHAPTER XVIII.

LEON AND HIS ENEMY FACE TO FACE.

Leon had put it straight, for he overheard the men ribbing each other about the ghosts as they came up the hill.

The story of the mine being haunted had to be proved either true or false before any real work could be done, and this was no doubt fully realized by William Whitehouse and Buck Sheehan, who were the real leaders of the expedition.

Leon flew back to his companions.

"Brace up now, Pete," said Jack. "You have been hitting the stuff again. Upon my word, I believe you have got a flask in your clothes."

"What if I have? It won't stay there long," growled the lawyer, thickly.

"There can only be trouble where this man is," thought Leon. "He'll queer the whole business before we are through."

Pigeon grasped one of the pillars and began muttering imprecations against Buck Sheehan.

"Shut up, you fool!" said Jack. "You have been loading up in the dark, but do try and pull yourself together until this job is done."

"Don't upbraid me, boys. I am doing the best I can," whined Pigeon. "It is a case of when the swallows homeward fly, but as I have swallowed all the stuff I took out of Tony's jug, there is nothing more to fear from me."

"Hush! Hush!" breathed Leon. "They are here!"

Voices could not be heard at the end of the tunnel.

"I tell you, it's all blamed nonsense," Buck Sheehan was saying. "There hain't no such thing as ghosts."

"So you have remarked several times, friend Buck," spoke another voice, speaking in cold, sarcastic tones. "And yet let me advise you against posing as the bravest of the brave. You might be one of the very first to turn tail and run if anything ghostly appeared."

"That's Whitehouse, my step-brother," breathed Leon in Jack's ear. "He's the coldest-blooded proposition ever. I'd know his voice anywhere."

"Hush! Hush!" whispered Jack. "You will start Pete going if you begin to talk."

The men now came forward, flashing lanterns ahead of them.

"There's one thing more," remarked another of the party, whom Leon knew afterward was the man Tom Ivory. "them boys must have seen something and told Pete Pigeon, and that's what put them all on

the run. Pete's mortal afraid of ghosts. He told me so himself."

At this instant the noise came. The rush of the wind was terrible to listen to.

For all the world it sounded like the cries of many people in distress.

The men stopped, but they did not scare, evidently having heard this before.

"Queer what makes that noise!" remarked Sheehan. "I'd like to understand the blame thing," and he flashed his lantern ahead as he spoke.

"Now!" breathed Leon.

It had all been arranged.

The three stepped in front of the white pillars, and stood with folded arms and bowed heads.

A gasping cry broke from Buck Sheehan's lips.

"Look! Look!" he exclaimed.

"Mortals, beware!" cried Leon, in sepulchral tones. "Retreat from this abode of the dead while there is yet time!"

"Heavens! Did you hear that? Look! Look!" they cried.

Then all in an instant Buck Sheehan took to his heels, and followed by all but Whitehouse, made for the mouth of the tunnel.

"Back, you cowards! Back! Do you mean to desert me—to leave me in the dark!" Whitehouse roared.

They did not heed him, however, and he followed, too.

The effect might have been all that Leon had planned if Pete Pigeon had not broke loose all at once with a wild war whoop which woke the echoes of the tunnel.

It had just the opposite effect on Whitehouse from what the drunken lawyer intended, and the result went to show what a dangerous thing it is to play ghost with a brave man in the deal.

Suddenly a shot rang out in the darkness—then another, and another.

Whitehouse was determined to test the ghosts.

"Heavens! I'm shot! Avenge me, boys!" yelled Pigeon, and he fell forward.

"Sheehan! Penny! Back! This is only a trick!" bawled Whitehouse.

"Down! Down!" breathed Jack, grabbing Leon's arm.

They dropped not a second too soon, for twice the man discharged his revolver in their direction.

"We must take to our heels," whispered Jack. "Pete is knocked out, and we'll be in the same boat if we stay here."

It was plainly so.

Now the men were returning with their lanterns, shouting as they came.

Leon and Jack ran for all they were worth.

Much as Leon disliked to desert the lawyer, there seemed no other way if they wanted to save their necks.

Returning the lanterns came they were lost in the darkness beyond the pillars, and here they paused to

look back and learn what was going to happen next.

"By thunder, this is a bad job!" panted Leon.

"Do you suppose Pigeon is dead?"

"Can't imagine anything else," replied Jack. "He never spoke after he went down."

"If we had only got those papers!"

"Never mind. A located mine is a matter of record. If Pepita lives, I suppose it belongs to her now. But hush! What are they saying back there?"

They could not make out a word until some one suddenly shouted:

"Why, it's Pete Pigeon! Now what about your ghosts?"

"Forward, boys! There were three of them. We want the others!" Whitehouse cried.

"Skip!" whispered Jack. "It will be our turn next."

On they ran until, when almost at the end of the tunnel, Jack made a misstep and twisted his ankle.

The pain was excruciating.

"I'm done for!" gasped Jack, and he sank down upon the rocky floor.

"What in thunder!" cried Leon, seizing hold of Jack's arm. "Stand on your feet, man! You'll spoil all!"

"Can't!" groaned Jack. "I'm fixed!"

It was a bad ending for a foolish piece of business. Leon did not know what to do, for the men were coming forward on the run.

"Leave me!" groaned Jack. "You must look out for yourself. I'm a goner—that's all!"

"I'm not leaving," said Leon. "If you are to be captured, I'll have to stand for it, too."

He stepped forward and awaited the coming of the enemy with folded arms.

It was only a minute and Buck Sheehan with Jake Penny and Tom Ivory were upon them, Whitehouse pressing close behind, carrying a lantern which he had taken from one of his men.

"There are your ghosts, boys!" he cried. "We have solved the mystery of one haunted mine."

"Just as I supposed," said Whitehouse, sneeringly, as he flashed the light in Leon's face. "It's young Fox and that fraud who pretends to be Leon Mack."

"That's right, Mr. Mack," said Buck. "That's right, sir."

"Well, Jack Fox," he added, "and what's the matter with you?"

"Go to thunder!" growled Jack. "I have nothing to say to you, Buck Sheehan."

"But I've got a lot to say to you," retorted Buck. "Perhaps you don't realize that I am one of the Tombstone vigilantes? My orders are to shoot you offhand."

"Go slow, gentlemen," said Leon, sturdily. "Jack Fox has done nothing to harm any of you."

"And what have you got to say about it, tender-foot?" broke in Tom Ivory.

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

PRINTING INSIDE AN EGG.

Rivaling at least, if not transcending in importance, the famous question asked by a former king of England as to how the apple got inside the dumpling is the question that Mrs. Sarah C. Williams of Cross Street, Quincy, Mass., would like to have scientists, ornithologists or anybody else answer.

Mrs. Williams broke open an egg recently, after the egg had been boiled. Inside she found a piece of newspaper about half an inch long and an eighth of an inch wide. There were a few lines of print on the paper, and Mrs. Williams could make out these words, "To be known," and, underneath, "go to." The egg was, in good condition.

MINNESOTA'S WAR SHAFTS.

Minnesota has recently erected monuments in the National Cemetery at Little Rock, Ark.; Memphis, Tenn., and Andersonville, Ga., to the memory of Minnesota volunteers who lost their lives in the Civil War and were buried in these cemeteries. There are 162 buried in Little Rock, 189 in Memphis and 95 in Andersonville.

Each monument consists of a bronze statue of a private soldier of heroic size, fixed upon a massive granite pedestal. The three monuments have been dedicated within the last two weeks. The ceremonies at Andersonville were held recently. The monuments were contracted for after the Minnesota Legislature had appointed a commission for that purpose.

SHERIDAN'S STATUE UNVEILED IN ALBANY.

A bronze equestrian statue of Gen. Phil Sheridan by J. Q. A. Ward, paid for by joint contributions by the State and Albany, N. Y., his birthplace, was unveiled October 7th on the plaza in front of the Capitol.

Veterans from all parts of the country, including half a hundred who served under Sheridan in the Shenandoah campaign, participated in the ceremonies—a memorial mass, a street parade and speeches by Governor Whitman and ex-Governor Glynn. Detachments of the regular army, the National Guard, Spanish War veterans, Boy Scouts, 2,000 school children and many civic organizations took part.

General Sheridan's widow and daughter were guests of honor. The day was observed as a holiday by the proclamation of Mayor Stevens.

POKER CHIP MATERIAL FROM TEXAS.

It has been several years since open gambling was allowed in Texas and other parts of the Southwest.

Even poker playing is becoming an almost lost art. As an evidence of the falling off in this one-time great national game, it may be stated that few people realize that there now exists an unprecedented shortage of poker chips, due to the war across the seas.

The knowledge of this threatened crisis has caused a world-wide search to be made for the mineral known as barite, which enters largely into the manufacture of poker chips. In the days before the foreign war barite came chiefly from Austria, it is stated.

It is well known to mineralogists that the Llano region contains many rare and little known metals. This fact caused a search for barite to be instituted here, with the result that a large deposit of the metal has just been discovered ten miles north of town. The poker chip supply will soon be replenished from this new source of raw material.

Barite is also used in the enameling of iron and steel, the manufacture of paints, the coating of linoleums and oilcloths and the adulteration of sugar.

BE KIND TO THE HORSE.

Be kind to the horse, says "The Indian Farmer." Don't berate him because he does something which should not have been done. Perhaps he had the right motive, but in his dumb way was unable to express it. Perhaps he wanted to help you, possibly he meant no evil, though outwardly he seemed perverse and stubborn. Give him credit for at least trying to be good, for there are few horses which are naturally bad.

Many persons take it for granted that when a horse does wrong he intended to do so, and they therefore punish him for it. Now, this action only aggravates the matter, and if continued will result in an incorrigible animal, made so solely from mistreatment by his master. This and this only explains why some horses are bad.

The best policy is to be kind to the horse. Remember that he is a dumb animal. Don't expect as much understanding from him as you expect of men. Remember that of all the animals which aid man, the horse is the most useful. Give him credit for that. Don't think him mean, for, unless made so by man, he seldom is. Don't punish him for every wrong he does, for possibly they are not so intended. Try to put yourself in his place, and don't forget that he is a slave.

Be kind to him, and see for yourself if your work does not proceed more smoothly than ever before. Follow the Golden Rule, and treat your horse as you would wish him to treat you if your positions were reversed. Investigate for once, and you will never say again that kindness doesn't pay.

ON TOP

OR

THE BOY WHO GOT THERE

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER II.

THE REALITIES OF LIFE.

There was not the least bit of a yellow streak in Tiff's composition. Fear was no component part of his nature.

He saw that he had half a dozen strong lads to face. Two or three were schoolboys. The others were apprentices from the nearby tannery.

The "tanners," as these boys were called, were known as the most disorderly and unruly element in Hilldale. They were, in fact, a power in the place and even feared by the police.

Whomever they chose to insult or annoy usually had small chance for redress. For, beneath all was a curious political element.

To Tiff, however, this did not count. He was a lover of fair play. He could only see that a helpless old man was being brutally treated. So long as an ounce of strength was left in his body, he would go to the defence of the weak. With the consciousness that he was in the right, Tiff felt no fear.

But he was not incautious. He saw that the odds were tremendously against him. Like a good general, he began to reckon his chances for victory.

They seemed slight enough. The tanners fairly surrounded him.

"Give it to him! Take ther starch out of him! Do him up!"

A big apprentice swung a terrific blow at Tiff. Had it struck him, he would have gone down and out.

But he ducked it and then made a dive for the big bally's stomach. Right and left fists Tiff drove into the young ruffian's midriff with such force that he went down in a gasping heap.

The others were about him like bees. He got a shower of half-spent blows all over his anatomy. Tiff was like a hunted fox in a ravening pack of hounds.

It would have been foolish for Tiff to have tried to conduct that battle according to ring rules. It was rough and tumble, give and take.

So Tiff employed any means in his power to defend himself. He kicked the shins of one of his foes so hard that the fellow dropped helpless to the ground. One after another he knocked down.

There was no doubt that Tiff could have thrashed any two in the gang. But the odds of six to one were too great, and it became certain that Tiff would be annihilated when an interruption came.

The affair had instantly filled the street with spectators. Singularly enough, there seemed at first none among them inclined to take Tiff's part.

But just when he felt his strength giving out Tiff saw a powerful figure descend upon the gang like an avalanche. Right and left the young toughs were sent reeling. They were scattered like chaff, and in an instant the tide was turned.

Just then a bluecoat showed himself at the street corner, and the tanners decamped in haste, leaving Tiff and his champion masters of the field.

Tiff was sore and bruised, but otherwise unhurt. He was face to face with a broad-shouldered, powerful-built youth who was dressed in a shabby-genteel sort of way, but who had a dissipated expression upon his otherwise handsome face.

"By jingo! I thought they were going to eat you up, Caspar," he cried, genially holding out his hand. "I guess it's lucky for you I happened along."

"My name is not Caspar," said Tiff.

"Oh, pardon me," said the other, with a grin. "I'm Tug Hardy, and I'm all the cheese over in the Third Precinct. Kind of a ruler, you know. I've been laying for those tanners and before I get through I'll lay some of them out."

Tiff was not favorably impressed with his new acquaintance. But he knew the debt he owed him, so he replied:

"I certainly owe much to you, and I am very grateful. My name is Tiffany Clark, and I am from Belmont."

The other youth gave a start.

"Oh! Are you any relative to Clark, the forger, over there?"

Tiff felt as if he had been struck a hard blow. He winced, and his face grew angry. Seeing this, Hardy hastened to rejoin:

"Oh, say! If he's a relative of yours——"

"He is my father."

"Your father?" gasped Hardy.

"Yes; but I want you to understand that he is no forger. He is an innocent man."

Hardy gave a faint whistle.

"Of course," he said, with sang froid. "Anybody

with sense would know that. But, I say, let's go along. The crowd is getting too thick."

Tiff turned and swept a glance about. Then he saw the old man with the dog hobbling eagerly toward him.

"My son," cried the old cripple, in a husky voice, "I want to express to you my deep gratitude. It will all come back to you. You shall lose nothing by defending old Moses Fiske."

"I am glad to have been on hand," said Tiff, in reply. "It is all right, sir. I hope you will have better fortune."

The old cripple, still with his hand on the little dog's collar, exclaimed:

"God bless you. I shall not forget!"

Then he turned and hobbled away.

"Poor old chap!" exclaimed Tiff, turning to Hardy.

"Yes," said the other, in a retrospective way. "He has had hard luck. But I wish him success. Now, pard, I think we had better keep an eye out. Those chaps may come back with a gang, and, of course, you and I can't lick the whole town."

"All right," agreed Tiff, as he followed his new acquaintance around a corner hastily and through several side streets. They brought up finally at the bridge which crossed the small river, on the banks of which the little town of Hilldale was situated. Here Hardy paused and said:

"I reckon we've slipped 'em, pard."

"I am glad of that," said Tiff. "Now, I want to thank you again for helping me out of a bad scrape."

"Oh, that's nothing," replied Hardy. Then he looked at Tiff in a critical way. "I say, do you live around here?"

"Oh, no," replied Tiff. "I live in Belmont."

"Oh! Then you work in Hilldale?"

"Not at present. I am looking for work."

Tug Hardy was a youth of precocity far beyond his years. He was keen enough to read something like the contents of Tiff's mind. He, in other words, seemed to divine his true position.

"Oh, I see! Can't you find a job?"

"I hope to before long," replied Tiff.

"Maybe I can help you. I know what it is to be down on your luck. Now see here," and Tug took on a confidential air. "I think I am right onto you. Kind of a goody-goody, mother's boy, eh? Don't know much about the world. Haven't had your eye-teeth cut. Oh, don't bristle up. You'll get that taken out of you in time. See here, I suppose you are looking for a nice first-class job in a bank or some place where only honest men can work. But just the same, those very chaps aren't any more honest than I am, and I play the races and take a chance at craps or policy just the same as they do, only they're in on a bigger scale. Are you on? Now, I can put you on a good line where you will make some coin, but you can't split hairs on the matter of honesty. Do you understand?"

Tiff drew himself up. He distrusted and disliked Hardy, and was resolved to end the acquaintance at

"Oh, yes, I understand you," he said, quietly. "But I prefer to choose my own employment——"

Hardy snapped his fingers.

"You're a greeny," he said, contemptuously. "Do you think I'm not onto you? You'll stand insults and kicks and abuse and starve just because your father has the name of a forger. The only fault he is guilty of is that he didn't take a million. If he had he would be a hero now instead of a fugitive from justice."

"It's of no use for you to talk to me that way," said Tiff, coldly. "My father is an honest man——"

"There it is! That's where he has been a fool. It's all right enough to be square. And I'll tell you one thing, I won't steal. But it is necessary for a fellow when in Rome to do as the Romans do. Now, what's the use! I've taken a shine to you, Tiff. Come over and have a glass of beer. It'll make a man of you. Then we'll talk business."

Tiff could stand this sort of thing no longer. He bowed coldly and started away.

"I do not drink," he said. "I bid you good-day!"

"Oh, say, don't be a fool!" Hardy called after him. "See here, Tiff." He held up his hand in which was a roll of greenbacks. "I know the winner in the Eastern handicap to-morrow. I've a straight tip. Follow me and you'll be a swell and wear diamonds."

But Tiff, with burning cheeks and angry eyes, walked away. He was glad that Hardy did not follow him or urge him further.

Tiff walked on into another street. He called at various places, seeking employment, but in each case he was informed that no help was needed.

The day was now drawing to a close. Tiff was quite exhausted with his day's efforts. He would not admit that he was discouraged.

He had but a small sum of money in his pocket. He had left home to come to Hilldale the day before. His invalid mother was patiently and hopelessly awaiting word from him.

Tiff's circumstances were desperate. He had left his mother in their little cottage home with barely supplies enough to last three days. The rent was overdue, and if not paid within the week they would be turned out of doors.

As Tiff thought of this his heart grew cold, and for the first time something like resentment against the world and its ways came over him.

"I must find work! I must have money!" he muttered. "My dear mother cannot stand this sort of life for long. I am young and strong and willing. There must be a chance for me somewhere."

At the moment Tiff was seated on a bench in a little park on the river bank. It was now quite dark.

The lights of the town were gleaming, the hum of traffic could be heard. People at intervals passed through the park. Tiff took in all this in a vague sort of way. He wondered where he would spend the night. He knew the necessity of husbanding his small store of money. He was tempted to stretch himself out on the bench and give way to exhausted nature.

(To be continued)

TIMELY TOPICS

While drawing a pail of water from a cistern the other night, Miss Mary Sheridan, seventy-five, of 56 West Eighteenth street, Whitestone, L. I., lost her balance and was drowned. Her sister, Mrs. Ellen Sheridan, with whom she resided, found the body when she returned from an errand and went to the cistern to get water.

More freight passed through the Panama Canal in July than in any month for a year, according to an official bulletin. Seventy-six vessels passed from the Atlantic to the Pacific; seventy-three in the reverse direction. They paid tolls of \$460,123. Of the number of ships using the canal in July twenty-seven were American, seventy-five British and eleven Japanese.

Nearly a million persons have been made homeless by one of the greatest floods on record in that section of China where the American Red Cross already has spent \$600,000 for flood protection. Reports to the State Department from the American consul at Nanking said the Hwai River had inundated an area of 7,000 square miles in Anhui province. Appeals for aid have been sent out for the homeless.

A whetstone and an ax, said to be more than 100 years old, were found imbedded in the trunk of a tree at Sandusky, O. The tree is known to be 115 years old. Edward Smith found the articles cutting down the tree. It is believed the tree once was hollow near the ground and the articles were placed in the interior for safe keeping, and that the tree grew together around them.

Two toes amputated that he might pass entrance examination to West Point, Harold De Forest of Watmore has been discharged from a hospital in Atchison, Kan. He had what is known as "hammer toes"—that is, two toes were drawn back and wouldn't straighten out. Those two toes wouldn't pass the examination and he was promised amputation in case the toes were amputated.

For the last several weeks mountaineers who have made the ascent of Mount Hood have been contradicting the statements of authorities on Northwestern natural history by reports of having sighted wild sheep or goats high on the snowfields of the peak. A drove of the animals near the summit of the snowpeak, huddled under the shelf of a glacial precipice, was recently seen by Hans and Paul Hoerlman, William Marshal, W. B. Arena and Ned Crawford. The mystery was explained by P. H. Mohr, a young upper valley homesteader, who was in the city of LaGrange. "It's my herd of Angoras run wild," said Mr. Mohr.

How a boil brought good luck is a story that comes to the Industrial Commission from one of the "service members" in a Milwaukee factory. A girl in the factory asked the service worker for advice about a boil on her neck. It was the fifteenth she had had in a few months. She earned \$8 a week. The service worker took the girl to the free clinic, where the physician discovered that the girl could speak six languages, including Polish, Russian, German and English. The clinic had been looking for such a girl to help the doctors. So the girl with the boil was employed at \$18 a week. She is now getting medical care for the boil and facilitating the work of the clinic.

A new electric cloth cutting device has a thin, circular knife which revolves at a rate of 6,000 revolutions per minute, which carries it through many thicknesses of cloth which a cutter would not be able to handle with the ordinary shears; and it does its work so quickly that its capacity is limited only by the ability of the operator to follow the pattern. The passage of the knife through the material takes the keen edge off the knife rather quickly, and, in order to take care of this, a small emery wheel is attached to the device, where it is always ready for use, so that the knife may be sharp at all times. The revolving knife is secured directly to the motor and is driven by a small belt. The weight of the motor assists the operator in holding it down to the work.

The possibilities of utilizing the kaing grass of Burma for paper-making have for some years past been investigated by interested persons, in consultation with paper manufacturers in England, and it is now announced that the conversion of this grass into pulp can be accomplished in a simple and economical manner. According to The Journal of the London Chamber of Commerce, it is expected that arrangements will soon be completed for the collection of the grass, its conversion into pulp, and its shipment in this form to paper makers in the United Kingdom. The yield of unbleached pulp is 39 per cent., calculated on the air-dry grass. This does not compare badly with esparto grass, from which about 43 per cent. of unbleached pulp is obtained. Kaing grass grows in great profusion in all parts of Burma, frequently reaching a height of ten feet. As a paper-making material it may be classed with esparto grass, and is much cheaper, though the quality of the pulp is not quite so good as that obtained with esparto. Esparto grass is to a large extent cultivated, whereas kaing grass grows wild and is sometimes rank and coarse. By systematic cutting, however, over properly preserved areas, a finer grass of uniform quality can be obtained in a very short time.

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Good Current News Articles

Ten years ago, while Mrs. Henry Martin conducted a hotel at Millerstown, Pa., a stranger, unable to make change, left without paying a bill for a night's lodging. She forgot the incident. Recently she received a \$1-bill with a note of thanks for waiting so long for a settlement.

Wolfram deposits of a promising character, both in quantity and quality, are now being worked experimentally near the banks of the Miramichi River in New Brunswick. The American Consulate has been informed by the owner of the property that preliminary operations have resulted in the discovery of three veins, and that one of these, twenty-six inches thick, is now undergoing active development.

Man has proven to be curiously unfitted for living in a circular room. At the Minot Ledge lighthouse, beds, tables, benches, etc., are fitted to the circular shape of the tower in order to economize space, and it is reported that five cases of well-developed insanity, with a number of cases of lesser mental trouble, have developed among men employed there. The specialists assert that with no angle on which it may rest, the eye roves around until the effect is maddening.

A remarkable campaign of ethnological and archaeological explorations, extending over three years, has recently been completed by an expedition from the University of Pennsylvania, led by Dr. William C. Farabee. The expedition established headquarters at Para, and from that point made numerous journeys up the Amazon and its tributaries, visiting some thirty Indian tribes, many of which had never seen a white man, and carrying out archaeological excavations. The party made a rich collection of burial urns. In some regions these were found resting on the surface of the ground, never having been placed in the earth.

Increasing quantities of vegetable waxes are being used in the manufacture of candles, boots and furniture polishes and phonograph records, the chief materials of this kind in common use being carnauba wax, Japan wax, and China wax; such products realize high prices and find a good demand. A product resembling carnauba wax is prepared in Madagascar from the leaves of the raffia palm, which is the source of the bass used by the gardeners. The wax is obtained from the residuum of the leaves after the bass has been stripped off; it has approximately the same melting point (83 deg. C.) as carnauba wax, and behaves in the same way toward solvents. Provided that care is taken in its preparation to avoid inclusion of gritty impurities, the wax should prove useful to manufacturers of boot and furniture polishes.

Grins and Chuckles

"As I understand it, you lecture on the subject of peace at any price." "No. My rates are \$200 per lecture."

Grateful Patient—Doctor, I owe my life to you. Doctor—That's all right, sir; but I cannot take it in payment of my services.

Dolly (age eight)—Why does the clock start all over again when it gets to 12, Bobby? Bobby—Because 13 is an unlucky number, I suppose.

Immigrant—At least I am in free America. A man can do pretty much as he pleases in this country, can't he? Native—Y-e-s; unless he's married."

Mrs. Sharp—Those two women don't speak any more. Each said that she had the smartest child in town. Mrs. Carp—Which was right? Mrs. Sharp—Neither; I have.

Mother was looking at Bobbie's school report. "Why, Bobbie," she exclaimed, "you have only 74 in deportment. I shall have to tell your father." "All right. Go ahead and tell him," said Bobbie. "He was bragging all over town when he got 74 in golf."

"We were slowly starving to death," said the famous explorer at the boarding-house table. "Then we cut up our boots and made soup of them, and this sustained life." "Hust! hust! Not so loud," whispered the boarders on each side. "The landlady might hear you."

A lady, going from home for the day, locked everything up, and, for the grocer's benefit, wrote on a card: "All out. Don't leave anything." This she stuck under the knocker on the front door. On her return home she found her house ransacked, and all her choicest possessions gone. To the card on the door was added: "Thanks. We haven't left much."

NO DUEL.

By D. W. Stevens.

The sword-fish which laid Rochefort on his back upon his bed of exile has called public attention anew to the once famous Paris journalist.

It has also had the unexpected result of demonstrating the fond indulgence of the French press for this spoiled child of journalism.

Neither the intemperate violence of his writings nor his political adventures have succeeded in wholly alienating the affection of the French public.

The first cause of this indulgence is the admiration always felt in France for wit and talent.

Fifteen years ago Rochefort was the chroniqueur of the Figaro.

Someone introduced him to the author of "La Dame aux Camelias."

"Ah, monsieur!" cried Alexander Dumas, "I have just been reading your chroniques. What a talent you have!"

After such a commendation from such a mouth, a French writer can commit a great many follies without losing favor.

Another excuse for the indulgence of the French where Rochefort is concerned is his hot-headedness, his chivalrous, blind courage, a quality which will always command Gallic sympathy.

In fine, the good nature of the man, his sweetness, and obligingness with his friends, his madcap behavior, have always made and kept him popular.

Cham, the caricaturist, who had a great admiration for Rochefort's wit, could never understand his friend's violence and exaggerations.

"No one," he said, in the *Lanterne* days, "will ever be able to convince me that Rochefort is not every night carried off by masked bandits, who force him to write these dreadful things, pistol at throat."

There is one other peculiarity of Rochefort's character of which the French people give him the benefit as of an extenuating character.

In the midst of universal skepticism, he has always been a fanatical believer in the family, showing a passionate tenderness for his children, which gave him a unique sentiment of fatherly devotion.

When, in 1869, he had taken refuge in Belgium, afar from that boulevard which was his life, it was his love for his daughter that made him an exile.

The story is a forgotten one, and was very badly told at the time.

Of the four persons who knew the truth, Rochefort has never deigned to open his lips; Victor Noir was murdered soon after by Prince Pierre Bonaparte; Rochette, the printer, in prosecuting Rochefort in the courts of the empire, gave a version of the facts that was favorable to himself, and the fourth, M. Blavet, a Paris journalist, was not allowed to testify on the trial.

But he has told the story since, and here it is as we have it from his own lips:

At that time the first nine numbers of the *Lanterne* had appeared.

Its astonishing success had brought into the field a hundred would-be rivals that lacked nothing save Rochefort's sovereign popularity and nerve to achieve a like fortune.

One of these ephemeral publications was the *Inflexible*, in which men of the *passe police* abused Rochefort as the worst of malefactors.

One of the writers was Marchal, called De Bussy, who died drunk in an alleyway.

Villemessant, who had at one time employed him as a collecting agent, pronounced over him this characteristic funeral oration: "To-morrow they are going to plant him."

The other writer was a Pole, a Count de Stamirowski, known as Stamir.

Dingy fellows, the pair of them.

One morning Victor Noir and Blavet, who were then writing for the Figaro, were eating breakfast together at a restaurant.

Suddenly, his face pallid, his eyes starting out of his head, Rochefort burst into the room.

In his hand he held the last number of the *Inflexible*.

"Read it!" he said to his two friends in a sharp, curiously jerky voice.

As they read, the blood mounted to their foreheads, and disgust to their lips.

The paper was one long, villainous diatribe against Rochefort's daughter, a child of twelve years.

"When I raised my eyes," says Blavet, "to the face of the father stricken by so cowardly a blow, I was frightened. His eyes glared like those of a maniac."

"What are you going to do?" we asked, Noir and I, in a breath.

"What am I going to do? Parbleu, I am going to kill Rochette."

"Kill Rochette! You are not in earnest? He is only the ignorant publisher of the infamies. It is the authors who deserve an exemplary punishment—not their tool."

"I!" cried Rochefort; "I compromise myself with these policemen, these escaped convicts! I cross my sword with their poniards; I sign for them, even in their own blood, a certificate of respectability! Never! I am going to kill Rochette."

Say what they would, they could not budge him from this resolution.

When his rage was a little calmed, they said:

"You want to kill him with all the forms and ceremonies, so as not to expose yourself to the enemies who spy your every action. We will be your seconds."

Rochefort consented on condition that the duel should be an immediate one.

The three men jumped into a carriage and were landed at the publisher's, Boulevard Mont Parnasse.

Rochefort by this time had recovered his sanity, and almost smiled as he climbed the stairs.

After some minutes the printer, who had been no-

tified by his foreman of the visit, made his appearance—a tough-looking fellow, solid as a Hercules, six feet high.

Victor Noir was no baby, but he looked like one by the side of him.

The Colossus came in smiling obsequiously.

"Monsieur," said Rochefort, without any preamble, "my name is Henri Rochefort. I need not explain my errand."

"I confess," stammered Rochette, "that I do not comprehend——"

"You are going to comprehend," interrupted Rochefort, turning pale. "Do you acknowledge having printed in the journal, the Inflexible, of which you are the responsible conductor, an article insulting Mlle. Rochefort?"

"Certainly. What of it?"

"What of it? Mlle. Rochefort is my daughter. Do you accept the responsibilities for these infamous calumnies?"

"I accept the responsibility for everything I print."

"In that case," went on Rochefort, who was making a terrible effort to restrain himself, "if you are a man of honor, and I hope you are, things will go on smoothly. Your place, your hour, your weapons."

Rochette gave a great laugh.

"Oh, it's a duel you're after, is it?"

"Unless it is a contre danse."

Rochefort began to look dangerous again.

"But, my dear sir, you overlook a detail, which I hasten to bring to your notice. I am a Spaniard, and in my country we do not understand the duel except body to body, knife to right hand, mantle on left."

"That's all one to me—knife, dagger, poniard, cannon—I'm your man. Let us go down to the street and have it out without any more delay."

Rochette did not laugh any longer.

He stammered some unintelligible words.

"Yes or no?" shouted Rochefort. "Will you give me satisfaction for those lies printed by you about my daughter?"

A timid "No" was the response of the demoralized Hercules.

It had hardly been uttered when a vigorous slap fell on Rochette's mouth.

"Ah! Monsieur Rochefort," said the giant, supporting himself against the wall, "that was not right."

The three journalists laughed. Rochefort quietly drew out a card.

"If that slap of mine hurts you, monsieur, you can come for a plaster whenever you please."

Eight days later Rochefort was condemned, on the unsupported testimony of Rochette, to a four months' imprisonment. He fled to Brussels and the house of Victor Hugo.

RAG DOLL HELD \$180 GOLD.

"Keep this, my child, as it may come in handy some day."

This was the remark made more than twenty years ago by the mother of Mrs. Maggie Doyle, wife of a Fresno, Cal., policeman, when she gave her daughter a rag doll.

Mrs. Doyle has kept the doll for twenty years and has carried it in her trunk from one town to another. Recently she unpacked the trunk and found that the stuffing was coming out of the doll. She went to sew up the rip, but pulled out a little sack containing \$180 in gold. Mrs. Doyle's mother died ten years ago.

ANIMAL IMITATORS.

Experiments in which cats and dogs learn to open doors have shown that animals and human beings differ greatly in their power to "catch the idea" of doing things. The animals thus tested learned so slowly and continued for so long in opening the doors that they appeared to learn by some method other than the human way of recalling and putting into practice the movement which had been successful in the last trial.

Similar tests of other animals have proved that most of them are like dogs and cats in this respect, although some, raccoons, for instance, and monkeys, especially, stand closer to human beings in their methods of learning.

Another question bearing up an animal's power to recall and be guided by ideas is this: Can an animal learn to do something new by watching and imitating another animal? Every one knows that animals imitate one another in doing things that "come naturally" to them—that is, if one rabbit runs away, the others follow; if one chicken takes a drink, the others will. But suppose a chicken is shut up in a pen with food on the other side and can let itself out only if it pecks at a string in one corner, which is attached to a latch. Suppose, further, that another chick that has learned how to get out is put in the pen with him, and by pecking the string escapes; will the chick that is watching do likewise? asks the Washington Star.

Experiments have shown that it will not. It is not at all helped by the example of its companion, but has to learn by the same slow, hit-or-miss method that it would use if alone. This is another indication of the difference between an animal's mind and the mind of man. A human being would get the idea of the right action from watching others, but the chicken cannot. When the chicken imitates, it imitates blindly, some simple, natural, instinctive act, like drinking; it cannot imitate for a reason by observing the fortunate consequences of the act it imitates.

It is interesting to learn from experiments on monkeys at a zoo that they, unlike dogs, cats, chickens and rats, but like human beings, do seem to be able to profit by observing one another's behavior. In a number of cases one monkey would pull out a plug or tug at a string after he had seen a companion get food in this way, but not before.

FROM ALL POINTS

WAGNER'S UNIQUE RECORD.

Homer Wagner is unique in baseball in several ways besides being the only man who ever batted for .300 in seventeen successive years, and, never being a holdout, he has worked for only one man in his twenty seasons in major league baseball. He went to work for Barney Dreyfuss in Louisville in 1897, and he is still drawing his pay from the same man in Pittsburgh in 1916. No other active player has worked for one man anywhere near the same number of years.

A MYSTERIOUS MAZE.

At Waltham, Mass., there is a maze which is a duplicate of the historic one in the gardens of Hampton Court Palace, near London, England. It is a winding and confusing group of paths, bounded by high hedges; there are 1,000 trees which were planted in 1896. The total length of all the paths is about one-third of a mile, and the shortest path to the central pool is about one-fifth of a mile. It sometimes takes visitors more than an hour to find their way to the center; sometimes they give it up and call for help in finding their way out.

NEW PLAN TO CAPTURE CHICKEN THIEF.

Using a little Sherlock Holmes system in order to discover how his chickens disappeared, Harry Stroebe, of Appleton, Wis., concocted a plan to capture the chicken thief. He placed a gun loaded with powder in such a position that when the visitor entered the coop it would discharge.

Early in the morning, when all was quiet on Stroebe Island and Mr. Stroebe was deep in slumber, a loud report was heard. Ah, thought Mr. Stroebe, my scheme has worked. He immediately proceeded to the scene of action to find a coat tail brilliantly illuminated speeding to safety.

As far as the eye could see the burning coattail sped on.

The thief did not take a chick that time.

MEXICAN FIREFLIES.

A gentleman traveling from California to Vera Cruz came across millions of fireflies, near Jalapa, one of the most beautiful cities in Mexico.

He says the road from this point was brilliantly illuminated with myriads of fireflies. These are a bug about the size of an ordinary roach, and emit a light almost equal to that of a small wax taper. It is not the occasional sparkle of the little firefly of our country, but a continual blaze, proceeding from the eyes, as well as from two points beneath the wings.

Several of these insects, placed in a glass jar, will give sufficient light by which to read the smallest print, and when one rises in the air to any considerable height, it resembles a beautiful meteor slowly crossing the heavens.

A number of them flying through the air in different directions on a dark night present a very pretty appearance, well calculated to excite the wonder, if not the superstitious fears, of a person unacquainted with the cause of so strange a phenomenon.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE-DIGGER INDIANS.

The Digger Indians of California are, perhaps, the queerest tribe in America. They look as much like the African as the Indian race, and their way of living presents many strange features. They wander around in the deep forests and sleep wherever night happens to overtake them. When they boast of any covering at all, it is nothing but leaves and grass. They, unlike the other American tribes, seem to have no race traditions at all—with one exception. An old gray-bearded Digger declares that they were once ruled by a white woman called We-ki-no. From his description of this traditional ruler she must have been on a plane with Rider Haggard's "She." She was a great enchantress. The Diggers hold her in great dread even unto the present day. Any one causing her anger, so the old Indian says, would certainly meet with mysterious and horrible torture. We-ki-no, so his story went, lived alone in a hut made of grass and leaves. She lived on special food carried to her each day by the handsomest man or woman of the tribe, accompanied by the youngest infant, and she never appeared personally among the Diggers. She was always represented by a tame she-bear. The Diggers are a very peaceful people and never fight nor tell lies, but many of them are persistent thieves. They have no use for money as far as buying is concerned, and if they do happen to get hold of a piece of silver or gold, they at once bury it in the belief that they may use it after their death. They absolutely refused to do any sort of work. They will eat anything—cat, skunk, mink, snake, ants, bugs and certain kinds of worms. The native ants, big black ones, they are especially fond of. Also, they highly esteem the grasshoppers as a food. In the rough country which they inhabit the cougar or mountain lion still roams, and the Diggers believe that when dead they become cougars. If they meet a cougar they call it by the name of some one who has died, and who, they suppose, is embodied in that particular beast. If they guess right, they think the cougar will at once change into the form of the person named and all will be well.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

RATTLESNAKE UNDER CHAIR.

Mrs. Guy Hume had a narrow escape from a rattlesnake at Dix's Camp near Paradise, Cal. She discovered the snake under the chair in which she was sitting.

Mrs. Hume summoned her husband, who killed the snake. A moment later, Mrs. Hume spied another rattler and shot at it with a rifle. She missed and a pet dog rushed at the snake and was bitten in the ear.

Mr. Hume killed the rattle and had to amputate the dog's ear to save the animal's life.

RAISES ODORLESS SKUNKS.

Scentless skunks are being raised by W. S. Engleman of Ramsey, Ind. A pen of the animals has attracted attention at county fairs. Engleman has been engaged in breeding skunks for several years, and through a series of experiments has succeeded in producing an odorless polecat. One of his objects was to raise animals of uniform size and colors, black pelts being the most valuable. He has succeeded in breeding a kind that shows only a white spot on the top of the head. The skunks burrow into the ground and will come out for food when called.

BOY OF THIRTEEN SOLVES A PROBLEM.

A thirteen-year-old Minneapolis boy has solved the problem of the ages. He has perfected a device to awaken the maid and cause her to close the windows when it rains at night. The inventor of the "shower alarms" is Morton Grant, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Grant.

Wires attached to a bell in the maid's room are connected by a piece of dry paper, a nonconductor of electricity.

When rain begins to fall the first drops fall into a funnel and wets the paper. The paper then becomes a conductor, closes the electrical circuit and rings the bell.

BRINGS BIG POLAR BEAR.

The Norwegian-America liner Kristianiafjord, which arrived recently from Bergen, brought over a very handsome snow-white polar bear for the Brooklyn Zoological gardens. The animal, on account of his fondness for cold weather was kept in a big steel crate on the after steerage deck.

At one side of the crate there was a hole through which the big white bear put his head out to eat his rations of raw fish and drink buckets of water.

The other morning one of the women passengers in the steerage was standing in front of the bear's cage, when she suddenly felt a blast of hot air on

her ankles. Looking down, the startled woman saw the polar bear with his mouth wide open as he was about to yawn. She gave a loud shriek and fled down the companionway to the steerage quarters and then fainted.

U. S. DRESSES SEALSKINS.

For the first time in the history of the United States this country is handling its own sealskins, a condition that should have been brought about long ago, but was not, owing largely to trade secrets connected with the dressing and dyeing of the furs which were possessed exclusively in England, says The Portland Oregonian.

Seal furs are used more exclusively in America than in any other country on the globe, and the United States government has done more to prevent seals from becoming extinct than all the other nations put together. It is due entirely to the initiative that there is now a growing supply of seals from which to draw.

The total number in the Alaskan herd is now estimated at 200,000, and it is believed that 100,000 will be added this summer, after which, under moderate regulation, there will be little danger of extinction, such as faced the fur-bearing seals only a few years ago.

NEGRO LABOR SOUGHT.

An exodus of negro laborers from Savannah, Ga., to the number of more than 1,000 in one movement is arousing the organized opposition of Savannah's city officials to the activities of Northern corporations, who have sent agents into the South to lure laborers North with the inducement of higher wages, says The Manufacturers' Record. More than 2,500 negroes were at the railroad station when the 1,000 laborers were put on board two special trains destined for points along the Pennsylvania Railroad, in which interest the movement was instigated.

Other railroads in the North, where a shortage of labor exists on account of the drain the European war has made, are also reported as having representatives in the South, and grave alarm is expressed over the results which are likely to follow in the way of a serious shortage of labor in parts of the South.

The strict enforcement of present laws and ordinances and the enactment of still more stringent regulations are proposed in the place threatened with labor depletion. It is declared that the invading agents have inspired the negroes with a sort of frenzy for work in new lands, in spite of the fact that negro laborers from the Far South almost invariably find that they are unwanted for the rigors of winter in the North.

MAMAS.

This interesting toy is one of the latest novelties out. It is in great demand. To operate it, the stem is placed in your mouth. You can blow into it, and at the same time pull or jerk lightly on the string. The mouth opens, and it then cries "Ma-ma," just exactly in the tones of a real, live baby. The sound is so human that it would deceive anybody.

Price 12c. each by mail.

Wolff Novelty Co., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE BUCULO CIGAR.

The most remarkable trick-cigar in the world. It smokes without tobacco, and never gets smaller. Anyone can have a world of fun with it, especially if you smoke it in the presence of a person who dislikes the odor of tobacco. It looks exactly like a fine perfecto, and the smoke is so real that it is bound to deceive the closest observer.

Price, 12c. each, postpaid.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.

The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by express prepaid, 10 bottles for One Dollar.

No less than 10 bottles can be bought.
WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N.Y.

THE INK BLOT JOKER.

Fool Your Friends.
—The greatest novelty of the age! Have a joke which makes everybody laugh. More fun than any other novelty that has been shown in years. Place it on a desk, tablecloth, or any piece of furniture, as shown in the above cut, near some valuable papers, or on fine wearing apparel. Watch the result! Oh, Gee! Price, 15c. each, postpaid.

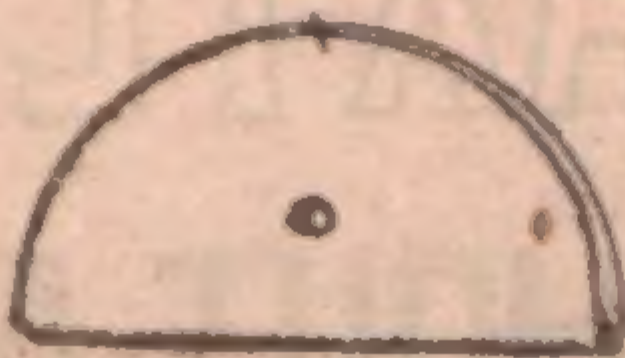
H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



The Bottle Imp.
The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so. This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about.

Price, 10c.

C. Behr, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

WHISTLEPHONE

This is one of the greatest musical instruments ever invented. It is made entirely of metal and is almost invisible when in use. With it, in a few moments, you can learn to play all kinds of tunes, have lots of fun, please and amuse your friends, and make some money, too. Fine for either song or piano accompaniment or by itself alone. You place the whistlephone in the mouth with half circle out, place end of tongue to rounded part and blow gently as if to cool the lips. A few trials will enable one to play any tune or air.

Price 6 cents each by mail, post-paid.
C. Behr, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

BOYS: We'll sell cheap or give for little work, rifle, ball, camera, watch, knife, Indian suit, printing press, and number of others. Write for free catalogue and particulars. Address DENTON CO., BOX 224, HARTSELLE, ALA.

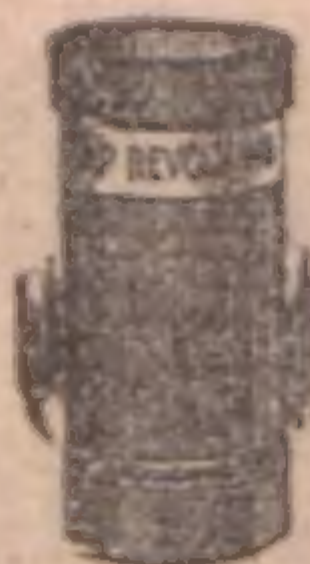
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